

AD-A256 633



2

**STRESS AND COPING WITH WAR:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF DEPLOYMENT AND REUNION FOR  
MORTUARY AFFAIRS UNITS, RESERVE UNITS, AND  
FIRST-TERM ARMY WIVES**

DTIC  
ELECTR  
OCT 06 1992  
S A D

This document is available  
for public use  
distribution

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY  
F. EDWARD HEBERT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES  
BETHESDA, MD 20814-4799**

92 10 5 081

422087

92-26493



3-18

# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Stress and Coping with War: The Experience of Deployment and Reunion for Mortuary Affairs Units, Reserve Units, and First-Term Army Wives				5. FUNDING NUMBERS F68852	
6. AUTHOR(S) Ann E. Norwood, M.D., James E. McCarroll, Ph.D., Robert J. Ursano, M.D., Carol S. Fullerton, Ph.D., Florence R. Rosenberg, Ph.D. Robert E. DeFraitess, M.D.					
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Department of Psychiatry Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences 4301 Jones Bridge Road Bethesda, MD 20814-4799				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Washington, DC 20307-5100				10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  Distribution Statement A				12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE  This document has been approved for public release and sale; its distribution is unlimited.	
13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words)  This volume presents a view of Operation Desert Shield/Storm from several perspectives: mortuary affairs personnel assigned to the Gulf, the 123rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) who participated in Operation Desert Storm, and first-term Army wives. In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait which led to the Persian Gulf War, a war characterized by "high tech" equipment, chronic threat of nuclear/biological/chemical weapons and a rapid pace. The war entered living rooms around the world. Correspondents reported via satellite from behind enemy lines, telephones were more readily accessible than in the past, soldiers even using cellular phones from the middle of the desert. The first two sections of the book present preliminary data from a group of soldiers at high risk for exposure to psychological trauma (mortuary affairs) and a group of soldiers who presented with multiple somatic complaints and fears of having been exposed to toxic substances or infectious diseases (123rd ARCOM). The final section addresses findings from questionnaires given to a group of first-term Army wives shortly after the Gulf War. The primary focus will be on their information-seeking methods and concerns about family and friends. These data provide information about ways war affects people directly and indirectly; and insights into the stresses inherent in going to war, returning from war, and waiting for loved ones to return.					
14. SUBJECT TERMS Stress, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Combat Psychiatry, Disaster Workers, Disaster, Military Psychiatry, Operation Desert Storm, Persian Gulf War, Death, Military Psychiatry, Social Support, Desert Shield				15. NUMBER OF PAGES	
				16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT		

PAGES \_\_\_\_\_  
ARE  
MISSING  
IN  
ORIGINAL  
DOCUMENT

**STRESS AND COPING WITH WAR:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF DEPLOYMENT AND REUNION FOR  
MORTUARY AFFAIRS UNITS, RESERVE UNITS, AND  
FIRST-TERM ARMY WIVES**

Addition For	
NTIS	
DTIC	
USCIB	
USCIB	
USCIB	
By	
DATE	
DATE	
A-1	

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 1

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY  
F. EDWARD HEBERT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES  
BETHESDA, MD 20814-4799**

**STRESS AND COPING WITH WAR:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF DEPLOYMENT AND REUNION FOR  
MORTUARY AFFAIRS UNITS, RESERVE UNITS, AND  
FIRST-TERM ARMY WIVES**

**STRESS AND COPING WITH WAR:  
THE EXPERIENCE OF DEPLOYMENT AND REUNION FOR  
MORTUARY AFFAIRS UNITS, RESERVE UNITS, AND  
FIRST-TERM ARMY WIVES**

**EDITORS**

**Ann E. Norwood, M.D.**

**James E. McCarroll, Ph.D.**

**Robert J. Ursano, M.D.**

**Carol S. Fullerton, M.D.**

**Florence R. Rosenberg, Ph.D.**

**Robert F. DeFraites, M.D.**

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY**

**F. EDWARD HEBERT SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

**UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES**

**BETHESDA, MD 20814-4799**

*Other Volumes in this series:*

**Exposure to Death, Disasters, and Bodies**

**Groups and Organizations in War, Disasters and Trauma**

**Individual and Group Behavior in Toxic and Contained Environments**

**Individual Responses to Disaster**

**Performance and Operations in Toxic Environments**

**Psychological and Behavioral Responses to a Chemical and Biological Warfare Environment: Final Recommendations**

**Training for the Psychological and Behavioral Effects of the CBW Environment**

**Trauma, Disaster and Recovery**

**Disaster Workers: Trauma and Social Support**

**Stress and Coping With War: Support Providers and Casualties of Operations Desert Shield/Storm**

**First Edition**

**Published, August 1992**

**This volume was supported by the Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research and the Department of Psychiatry, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	i
Executive Summary .....	iii
 I. Stress and Coping with Death: Mortuary Affairs Units in Southwest Asia	
A. Summary .....	3
B. Introduction .....	9
C. Mortuary Affairs Units .....	20
D. Comparison Units in Southwest Asia .....	71
 II. Stress and Coping in a Reserve Unit: Epidemiologic Consultation to 123rd Army Reserve Command	
A. Summary .....	93
B. Introduction .....	95
C. Summary of Response Frequencies .....	96
D. Summary of Interview Comments .....	97
 III. Stress and Coping at Home: The Responses of First-Term Army Wives to the Persian Gulf War	
A. Summary .....	105
B. Introduction .....	107
C. Summary of Response Frequencies .....	107
D. Summary of Written Comments .....	110
 IV. Investigators .....	117
V. Bibliography .....	119



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The support of a wide variety of people and institutions have enabled us to study the effects of trauma and disasters on our military forces, families, and communities. Most important are those individuals who have shared their experiences with us and allowed us a window on their lives during a difficult period. We respect and admire the study participants for their openness and altruism.

A number of individuals, through their personal support and effort, have fostered the development of these studies and recognized their importance to both the military and civilian communities. In particular, we wish to thank Drs. James Zimble, Harry Holloway, and David Marlowe. Their vision of the importance of understanding the effects of trauma and disaster and their personal and administrative support have sustained our work.

We wish to thank the Association of the United States Army Institute of Land Warfare for permission to reproduce the Gulf Chronology and maps included in this report. We are grateful for the hospitality and support provided to the EPICON team by MG Back, 123rd ARCOM commander, and his staff. COL Norman Teer, Division Surgeon, and his staff officers, LTC Peter Connallon and CPT Joyce Flanagan played central roles in coordinating the evaluation and care of their soldiers; their compassion and tireless efforts were central to the study. Our thanks also to CPT Marvin Ellis for keeping us informed of published and televised accounts of the "outbreak" which facilitated our understanding of the community climate in which the soldiers live. We were very fortunate to have expert mental health professionals to whom we could refer soldiers for further evaluation and treatment; we would like to acknowledge and thank LTC Connie Bontright, Executive Officer of the 55th Medical Detachment (Psychiatric) and the members of her team. The mental health teams played a critical role in helping the soldiers cope with the uncertainty surrounding the etiology of their symptoms and the stresses associated with deployment and reunion. We also wish to thank LTC Tom Rexrode and Mr. Tom Boulier, Director and Deputy Director, respectively, of the U.S. Army Mortuary Affairs Center and School, Fort Lee, Virginia, for their support of and contributions to this research.

We hope that through increasing our understanding of the effects of trauma and disasters, we will be better able to provide aid to those in our communities exposed to such tragedies. Again, our heartfelt thanks to the men and women who supported these studies.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This volume presents the reader a view of Operation Desert Shield/Storm from several perspectives: mortuary affairs personnel assigned to the Gulf, the 123rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) who participated in Operation Desert Storm, and first-term Army wives. In August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, initiating a sequence of events which ultimately lead to the Persian Gulf War. The Persian Gulf War heralded the arrival of a new style of war characterized by "high tech" equipment, chronic threat of nuclear/biological/chemical weapons and a rapid pace. The war entered living rooms around the world, with an immediacy never experienced before. Beginning with the initial reports of a radar blip leaving U.S. warships headed for Baghdad, television brought the war "live" into the living rooms of America. Correspondents reported via satellite from behind enemy lines. The war was also brought closer to loved ones through enhanced communications; telephones were more readily accessible than in the past, some soldiers even using cellular phones to call from the middle of the desert.

The pace of the war was astounding, as was the rapidity with which personnel and supplies were sent. By the beginning of the air war on 17 January 1991, approximately 500,000 American service personnel and their supplies had been dispatched to the region. Another unique feature of the war was the mobilization of tens of thousands of reservists. These individuals made whirlwind transitions from citizen-soldier to soldier, an eventuality few expected. This volume presents some of the additional dilemmas faced by reserve personnel.

The first two sections of the book present preliminary data from a group of soldiers at high risk for exposure to psychological trauma (mortuary affairs) and from a group of soldiers who presented with multiple somatic complaints and fears of having been exposed to toxic substances or infectious diseases while in the Gulf (the 123rd ARCOM). The final section addresses findings from questionnaires given to a group of first-term Army wives shortly after the Gulf War. The primary focus will be on their information-seeking methods and concerns about family and friends.

These data provide important information about ways in which war affects people directly and indirectly. It presents insights into the stresses inherent in going to war, returning from war, and waiting for loved ones to return. The following findings can provide guidance for commanders, community leaders, friends and family members:

- The threat of biological and chemical warfare stimulates fear which can be managed through education and leadership.
- Anticipation of handling, as well as the actual handling of injured or dead soldiers is very stressful.
- Separation from family is one of the most stressful aspects of war.

- Families and friends at home should be encouraged to write letters to soldiers, even if they do not receive replies. Also, in this age of cellular telephones and telephone credit cards, Command should consider widening telephone availability.
- High priority must be given to allocating time for rest and respite.
- Involving spouses/significant others in the mobilization and recovery process increases the strength of the recovery environment.
- Family members, significant others and friends of deployed personnel also experience significant stress. Services must be allocated to help families cope with the fear and uncertainty of war.
- Good leadership and a solid organizational structure are critical to individual and unit recovery from war.
- The trauma of war can also have positive effects. Individuals can re-order their priorities and the value of family, friends, and country is underscored.
- Further research must be conducted on television coverage of war and its effect on viewers.
- Investigation must be continued into the ways in which people integrate experiences such as wartime deployment into their lives. Factors which enhance growth or make persons vulnerable to illness must be identified and intervention strategies developed.
- Psychiatric consultation, using an epidemiological prevention model, can be of value in preventing acute and delayed morbidity related to the trauma of war.

## **CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, 1990-1991.**

### **August 1990**

- 2 Iraq invades Kuwait. U. N. demands withdrawal.
- 3 U. S. announces it will add naval forces to Gulf.
- 6 Iraq postures to invade Saudi Arabia. Saudi king invites U. S. assistance. U. N. authorizes economic sanctions. Bush orders troops and aircraft to the Persian Gulf. Operation Desert Shield commences.
- 8 Iraq declares Kuwait a province. First U. S. Army units arrive in Gulf.
- 11 First fast sealift ship departs U. S.
- 16 Defense Secretary Cheney authorizes U. S. Navy to intercept ships going to or from Iraq and Kuwait.
- 17 Baghdad threatens to use Westerners as human shields.
- 18 U. N. condemns Iraq for holding hostages.
- 22 President authorizes reserve call-up.
- 25 Army activates first reserve units.
- 27 First sealift ship arrives Saudi Arabia.

### **September**

- 7 First reserve units deploy to Saudi Arabia.
- 16 U. N. condemns Iraq for violence against embassies.
- 25 U. N. tightens embargo on air traffic.

### **November**

- 8 Bush orders additional 200,000 troops to the Gulf.
- 29 U. N. approves "all necessary means" to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

### **December**

- 6 Saddam announces release of all hostages.
- 22 Iraq threatens to use chemical weapons if attacked.

## January 1991

- 12 U. S. Congress grants Bush authority to go to war.
- 15 U. N. deadline for Iraqi withdrawal passes.
- 17 U. S. and allied forces launch air attack on Iraq. Operation Desert Storm begins.
- 18 Iraq fires first SCUD missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia. Patriot missile scores first kill.
- 19 Added Patriot missiles airlifted to Israel. Bush authorizes call-up of 220,000 reservists.
- 20 U. S. forces grow to 472,000. Army calls up 20,000 Individual Ready Reservists. Iraq displays captured airmen on TV.
- 21 First rescue of downed coalition pilot in Iraq. Baghdad threatens to use allied POWs as human shields.
- 26 Iraqis fly fighter aircraft to Iran. First U. S. combat firing of cruise missile from submarine.
- 29 Iraqi battalions attack Saudi town of Khafji.
- 31 Coalition forces recapture Khafji. Iraq loses more than 500 POWs, 300 KIAs.

## February

- 3 Allied air campaign passes 40,000 sorties.
- 13 American attack helicopters make night raids on Iraqi positions.
- 21 500 Iraqis surrender to Apache helicopter attack.
- 24 Land war begins. U. S., coalition forces launch attacks across 300-mile front. First units met by mass surrenders.
- 25 VII and XVIII Corps drive deep into Iraq. SCUD missile kills 28 U. S. troops in Dhahran.
- 26 XVIII Corps units attack into Euphrates valley. VII Corps destroys Iraqi armored divisions. Marines surround Kuwait city.
- 27 Allies liberate Kuwait City. U. S. tanks crush Republican Guard. Bush halts offensive at 2400 EST. Iraq agrees to all U. N. resolutions.

## **March**

- 2 Iraqi armored column engaged by 24th Infantry, loses 197 armored, 400 wheeled vehicles.
- 3 Allied, Iraqi military agree on cease-fire details, release of POWs. Shi'ites in Basra revolt against Saddam.
- 4 Iraq releases 10 POWs (6 U. S.).
- 6 First U. S. combat troops enplane for U. S. A. Remaining 15 U. S. POWs released.
- 7 Saddam sends Republican Guard units against rebels.

## **April**

- 3 Iraqi revolt ebbs. Kurdish rebels flee to borders.
- 16 President Bush orders U. S. military to establish refugee camps.

**STRESS AND COPING WITH DEATH:  
MORTUARY AFFAIRS UNITS IN SOUTHWEST ASIA**

## SUMMARY

During the war in the Persian Gulf in 1990, four mortuary affairs companies and a battalion headquarters were deployed to Saudi Arabia. Three of these companies and the battalion headquarters were in the Army Reserve. Following their return to the U. S., we administered questionnaires to and interviewed 158 of these people, 131 men and 27 women, approximately 45% of all the mortuary affairs soldiers who served in this conflict in the Middle East. For comparison, we surveyed and interviewed two other Army Reserve logistics companies, a total of 108 soldiers, 102 males and 6 females, who also deployed to the Gulf, but had no mortuary duties. The non-mortuary units were responsible for providing supplies and maintenance activities to other units. All the reserve mortuary affairs companies were understrength and only about 27% had experience handling remains before the war. In the active duty company, 66% had such prior experience. Based on the projection of U.S. fatalities, mortuary affairs battlefield force structure and doctrine were revised to support the operation. As a result of this change, two companies were split into small teams and sent to support the divisional units. This caused a great deal of organizational and personal stress for many of the soldiers. The other two companies and the battalion headquarters were located at fixed facilities: the theater evacuation point at King Khalid Military City (KKMC) and the U. S. Air Force mortuary at Dhahran. The most common fear expressed by these soldiers was that they would encounter the body of a relative, friend, or someone known. There was also apprehension that the enemy would use chemical and biological weapons and produce a large number of fatalities which would overwhelm their assets. Seventy-three percent (73%) of soldiers in the mortuary affairs units handled remains: 86% of the soldiers who were trained in mortuary affairs and 56% of the non-mortuary affairs-trained soldiers. The median number of remains handled by all the mortuary affairs units was between 60 and 68. At the height of the war, they reported many intrusive thoughts about the bodies and attempts to avoid such thoughts. Their preoccupation at the height of the war with such thoughts and attempts to avoid them was, in some cases, two to three times that of the non-mortuary affairs soldiers. For example, 36% said "I thought about the casualties when I didn't mean to." Forty percent (40%) of the mortuary affairs soldiers said the fatalities "Could have been me" compared to 19% for the non-mortuary affairs soldiers.

The level of support reported from co-workers and supervisors was not substantially different in the mortuary affairs and non-mortuary affairs units or in the cases in which soldiers were detailed to other units. Thirty-two percent (32%) of the soldiers in the mortuary affairs units reported their co-workers as "Very supportive" whereas the figure was 35% for the non-mortuary affairs units. Supervisors were rated as "Very supportive" by 27% of the mortuary affairs soldiers and 22% of the non-mortuary affairs soldiers.

When symptoms of psychological disturbance were measured three to five months after their return, July to November, 1990, the number of symptoms endorsed at a level of 20% or more of the soldiers was about twice as great in the mortuary affairs organizations compared to the non-mortuary affairs soldiers, 20 compared to 11. In the mortuary affairs units, 38% reported that



there had been family problems while they were gone; 41% in the non-mortuary affairs units. In the mortuary affairs units, nineteen percent (19%) reported family problems since their return; the figure was 29% for the non-mortuary affairs soldiers. Fifty-two percent (52%) in the mortuary affairs units reported that their lives or their family's life had been adversely affected by their service in the Gulf; 41% so stated in the non-mortuary affairs units. Some people saw their experiences in the desert positively while others did not. For the mortuary affairs soldiers, this figure was 66%, for the non-mortuary affairs soldiers, 53%. Likewise, some would serve with their unit in the same capacity again while others said they would not want to do so. For the mortuary affairs soldiers, 47% said "Yes" while the figure was only 12% for the non-mortuary affairs soldiers. When asked if their lives had returned to normal, forty-four percent (44%) of the mortuary affairs soldiers said their lives had not returned to normal for at least two months after their return home, for the non-mortuary affairs soldiers, the figure was 39%.

In conclusion, at the time of the questionnaires, three to five months after return, both the mortuary affairs soldiers and the non-mortuary affairs soldiers were reporting continued aspects of stress and recovery. The mortuary affairs soldiers had more symptoms of distress at the time of the survey, but their level of functioning did not seem to be impaired, in the cases we encountered. People who are exposed to war and trauma are often changed by their exposures to these events, but such changes are often positive ones. In these cases, the mortuary affairs soldiers were more likely than the non-mortuary affairs soldiers to be willing to perform the same duty with their unit again and to say that they had derived something positive from their experiences.

**CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS OF MORTUARY AFFAIRS AND  
COMPARISON  
UNITS DURING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, 1990-1991.**

**August 1990**

- 2 Iraq invades Kuwait. U. N. demands withdrawal.
- 3 U. S. announces it will add naval forces to Gulf.
- 6 Iraq postures to invade Saudi Arabia. Saudi king invites U. S. assistance. U. N. authorizes economic sanctions. Bush orders troops and aircraft to the Persian Gulf. Operation Desert Shield commences.
- 8 Iraq declares Kuwait a province. First U. S. Army units arrive in Gulf.
- 11 First fast sealift ship departs U. S.
- 11 54th Quartermaster Company (mortuary affairs) notified of impending deployment.
- 16 Defense Secretary Cheney authorizes U. S. Navy to intercept ships going to or from Iraq and Kuwait.
- 17 Baghdad threatens to use Westerners as human shields.
- 18 U. N. condemns Iraq for holding hostages.
- 22 President authorizes reserve call-up.
- 25 Army activates first reserve units.
- 27 First sealift ship arrives Saudi Arabia.

**September**

- 7 First reserve units deploy to Saudi Arabia.
- 12 Advanced party of 54th QM arrives in Saudi Arabia, balance of company follows in October.
- 16 U. N. condemns Iraq for violence against embassies.
- 25 U. N. tightens embargo on air traffic.

**October**

- 19 311th QM Company (mortuary affairs) and 246th QM Battalion HQ (mortuary affairs) arrive in Saudi Arabia.

## *Stress and Coping with War*

### **November**

- 8 Bush orders additional 200,000 troops to the Gulf.
- 29 U. N. approves "all necessary means" to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

### **December**

- 6 Saddam announces release of all hostages.
- 19 689th QM (mortuary affairs) Company arrives in Saudi Arabia.
- 22 Iraq threatens to use chemical weapons if attacked.

### **January 1991**

- 12 U. S. Congress grants Bush authority to go to war.
- 15 U. N. deadline for Iraqi withdrawal passes.
- 17 U. S. and allied forces launch air attack on Iraq. Operation Desert Storm begins.
- 18 Iraq fires first SCUD missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia. Patriot missile scores first kill.
- 19 Added Patriot missiles airlifted to Israel. Bush authorizes call-up of 220,000 reservists.
- 20 U. S. forces grow to 472,000. Army calls up 20,000 Individual Ready Reservists. Iraq displays captured airmen on TV.
- 21 First rescue of downed coalition pilot in Iraq. Baghdad threatens to use allied POWs as human shields.
- 26 Iraqis fly fighter aircraft to Iran. First U. S. combat firing of cruise missile from submarine.
- 29 Iraqi battalions attack Saudi town of Khafji.
- 31 Coalition forces recapture Khafji. Iraq loses more than 500 POWs, 300 KIAs.

### **February**

- 1 630th QM Company (mortuary affairs) arrives in Saudi Arabia.
- 3 Allied air campaign passes 40,000 sorties.
- 9 Both non-mortuary affairs Army Reserve companies arrive in Saudi Arabia.

- 13 American attack helicopters make night raids on Iraqi positions.
- 21 500 Iraqis surrender to Apache helicopter attack.
- 24 Land war begins. U. S., coalition forces launch attacks across 300-mile front. First units met by mass surrenders.
- 25 VII and XVIII Corps drive deep into Iraq. SCUD missile kills 28 U. S. troops in Dhahran.
- 26 XVIII Corps units attack into Euphrates valley. VII Corps destroys Iraqi armored divisions. Marines surround Kuwait city.
- 27 Allies liberate Kuwait City. U. S. tanks crush Republican Guard. Bush halts offensive at 2400 EST. Iraq agrees to all U. N. resolutions.

**March**

- 2 Iraqi armored column engaged by 24th Infantry, loses 197 armored, 400 wheeled vehicles.
- 3 Allied, Iraqi military agree on cease-fire details, release of POWs. Shi'ites in Basra revolt against Saddam.
- 4 Iraq releases 10 POWs (6 U. S.).
- 6 First U. S. combat troops enplane for U. S. A. Remaining 15 U. S. POWs released.
- 7 Saddam sends Republican Guard units against rebels.
- 14 311th QM Company and 246 QM Battalion HQ return to Puerto Rico.

**April**

- 3 Iraqi revolt ebbs. Kurdish rebels flee to borders.
- 10 630th QM Company returns to New Orleans. First non-mortuary affairs company returns to U. S.
- 16 President Bush orders U. S. military to establish refugee camps.
- 17 54th QM Company returns to Ft. Lee, VA.

**June**

- 11 689th QM Company returns to Oakland, CA.

**August**

- 4 Second non-mortuary affairs company returns to U. S.

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Mortuary Affairs Organizations and Duties**

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the United States prepared for deployment and war. Part of wartime preparation must anticipate caring for American soldiers who die in the conflict. On the battlefield in the United States Army, this function is performed by mortuary affairs personnel, a logistic function. In August 1990, the U. S. Army had only one active duty mortuary affairs company, the 54th QM at Ft. Lee, Virginia. There were three reserve mortuary affairs companies, the 311th in Ramey, Puerto Rico, the 630th in New Orleans, and the 689th in Oakland, and a reserve mortuary affairs battalion headquarters, the 246th, also in Ramey, Puerto Rico. By the beginning of the ground war (February 1991), all of these organizations had deployed to Saudi Arabia and were in position to handle war dead.

Each company was supposed to have about 100 personnel. Only the 54th was near this figure, about 90 people, while the other companies were considerably understrength. According to Army doctrine at that time, mortuary affairs companies were supposed to be assigned on the basis of one per 145,000 troops and were expected to process about 175 remains per day. A total of 539,000 U. S. military service personnel deployed to the Gulf of which 303,500 were Army. The normal mission of the mortuary affairs company at that time was to establish and operate a temporary cemetery and four collection points (locations to which remains are brought by field units). A mortuary affairs company includes more than just the mortuary affairs soldiers. At full strength, they make up about 75% of the company and the rest of the soldiers perform support missions necessary to keep the company operating. These people may or may not have direct contact with remains. Examples of these other jobs are cook, construction equipment operation, carpentry, drafting, and mechanic.

Soldiers from the 689th and the 630th, operated the theater air evacuation point at King Khalid Military City (KKMC) and some served in the U. S. Air Force mortuary at Dhahran. Figure 1 shows the location of the fixed mortuary facilities at KKMC and Dhahran.

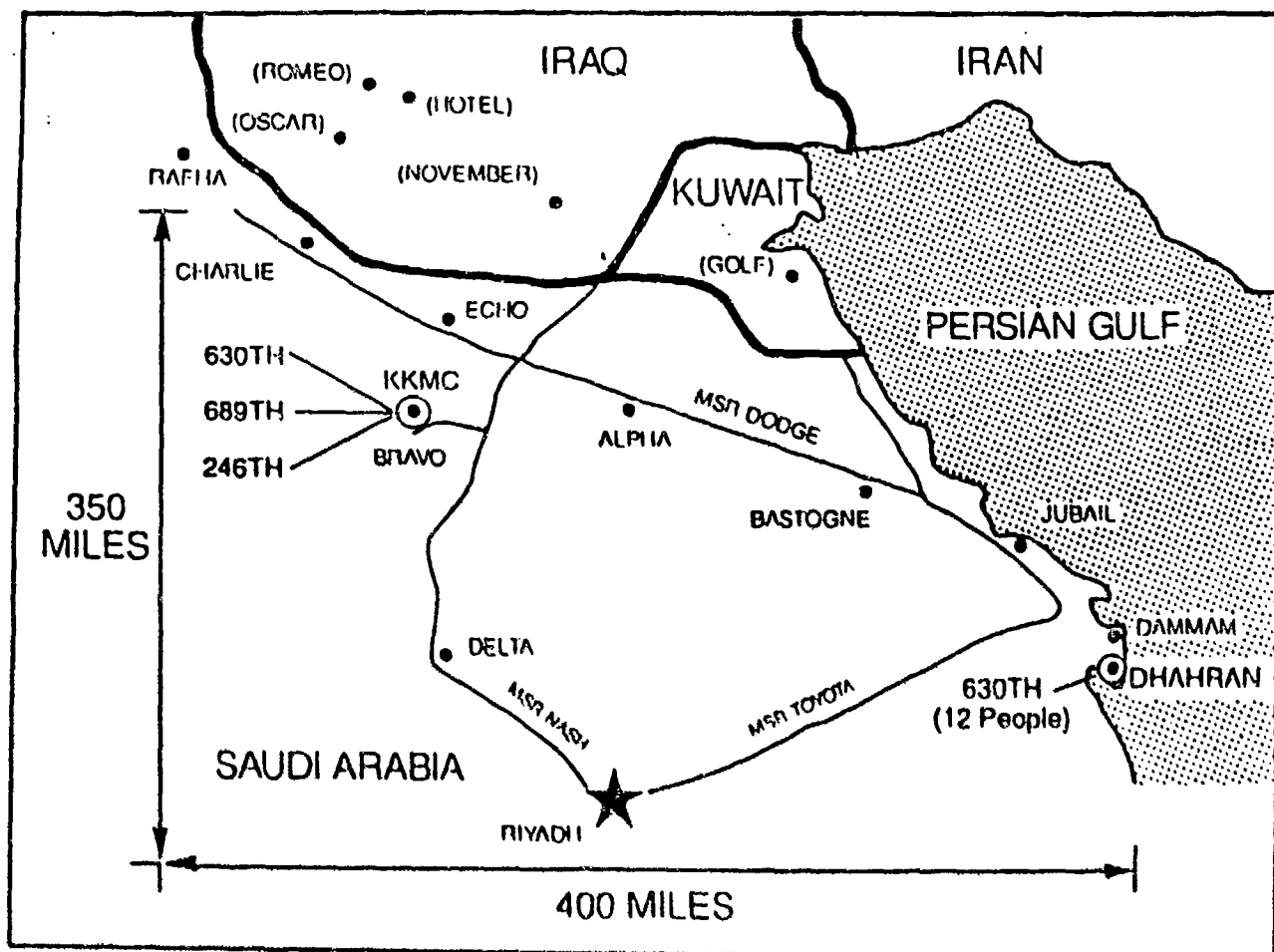


Figure 1. Location of mortuary facilities (KKMC and Dhahran)

The 54th and the 311th were split into teams of four to seven persons and placed in direct support of the 1st Corps Support Command (the 18th Airborne Corps) and the 2nd Corps Support Command (the Seventh Corps). In addition to the mortuary affairs soldiers in these organizations, more were obtained from the supply and services companies in each division. A total of 42 collection points were established, operated by approximately 150 soldiers. Figure 2 shows the areas where the 54th and 311th QM served in support of the line divisions. These soldiers received, tentatively identified, and coordinated the evacuation of deceased U. S. personnel and their personal effects. Had it been required, they could have conducted temporary burials, but this was not done. From KKMC, the remains were flown to Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, where positive identification and preparations for burial were performed before the deceased soldier was returned to his or her family. All of the mortuary affairs organizations stayed in the Gulf until at least April 1991. One unit, the 689th, was given another mission which was to operate the transient hotels for troops returning to the U.S. and was required to stay until June.

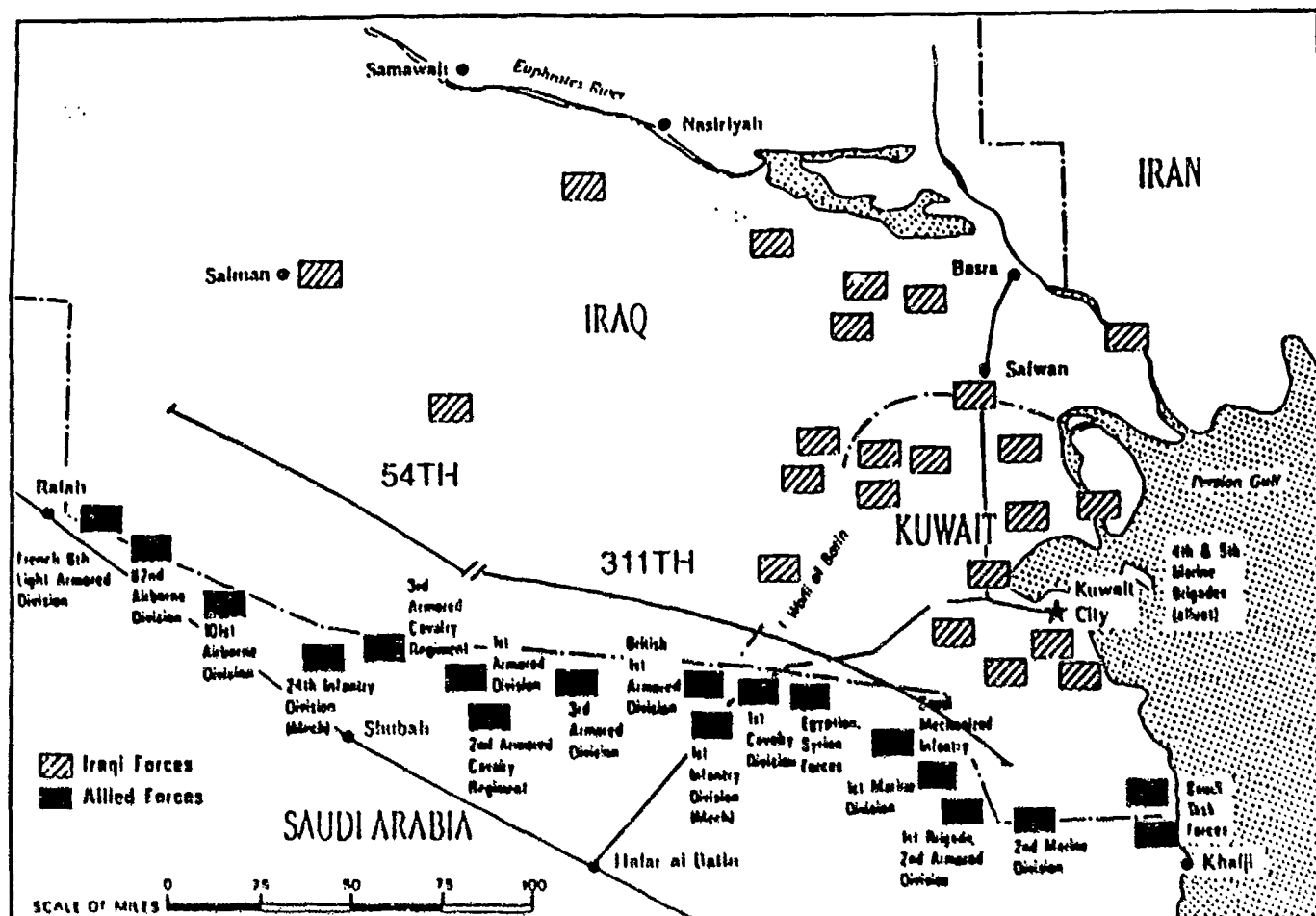


Figure 2. Areas in which 54th and 311th QM Companies were deployed

Following the return of U. S. military forces from the Middle East, teams from the Department of Military Psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, and the Department of Psychiatry, Uniformed Service University of the Health Sciences (the military medical school) went to each of these mortuary affairs organizations to determine the stress of the deployment, the stress of handling of war dead, and the adjustment of the soldiers after the return home. We interviewed and surveyed these organizations three to five months after their return to the U. S., between July and September 1991. We collected research information from a total of 158 participants, 131 men and 27 women. We obtained a total of about 57% of all members of these organizations; however, not all had an opportunity to volunteer. The total strength of these five organizations was approximately 279 at the time of our research. Four of the five mortuary affairs units were in the Army reserve. Reserve organizations do not require soldiers to attend every weekend drill; many were absent from drills after their return home. We obtained participation from virtually 100% of the persons who were present at the time of the questionnaires. There were approximately 350 mortuary affairs soldiers in Saudi Arabia. We obtained an estimate total of 45% of all these soldiers. All participants in this research were volunteers. We administered questionnaires in these units and interviewed as

many people as possible in small groups and individually. In addition to the mortuary affairs organizations, two non-mortuary affairs companies were surveyed and interviewed for comparison with the mortuary affairs companies for the stress of deployment to the Gulf. We obtained the participation of about 54% of these soldiers. The questionnaires consisted of standardized psychosocial and psychiatric instruments to assess the amount of stress felt, support obtained, symptoms of distress, and other reactions to the deployment and the return home. A number of questions also asked the soldiers to provide written responses to specific questions about their experiences in the Gulf and to describe their experiences in readjusting since their return home. This document is meant to give the reader a description of the stressors encountered by the mortuary affairs soldiers while in the Middle East, as obtained by interviews, and their most noteworthy observations from the questionnaires. More extensive analyses of the data will be conducted based on these and other data.

#### **A. Mortuary affairs units**

##### **Characteristics of Participants**

Surveys were completed by 158 deployed soldiers who were in the mortuary affairs organizations, 131 males (83%) and 27 females (17%). Ninety-five (60%) of these soldiers were in the career field of mortuary affairs (57F). The balance, 63 other soldiers (40%), were in another field, but were assigned to a mortuary affairs organization. Some of these people helped with the remains and some did not. The age range of the participants was from 18 to 58 with a median age of 27.5 years. Ninety-three percent (93%) were enlisted with 74% of the respondents between the ranks of E-3 and E-5. Thirty-two (32%) percent of the participants were black, 42% were Hispanic, and 19% were white. Forty-five percent (45%) were married; 32% were single. Thirteen percent (13%) had participated in a mass casualty or disaster; 40% said they had previously worked with dead bodies (before the deployment).

##### **Chronology of the Deployment and Stresses Encountered Pre-Deployment**

**Notification.** Almost everyone expected to be deployed, although no one was sure when the unit would be called with the exception of the active duty company, the 54th. All the units began some preparation for deployment almost immediately after the invasion. Notification came through the chain of command in all cases, but one unit heard it announced on television that a reserve mortuary affairs company from that state would deploy to the gulf. The commander was following orders not to alert the personnel until told to do so. At the same time, unfortunately, the information was given to the press. Unit members said that they wished they could have received this information earlier since it would have given them more time to prepare for the deployment.

**Problems in deploying.** There were many instances of "false alerts" in which people were told they would be leaving soon, but did not. Many families had made alternative living arrangements for spouses and children during the service member's absence. When they were alerted, they put these plans into effect only to be forced to cancel them when the deployment was called off. The financial effects of these changes in plans were often severe and had to be borne by the men and women themselves. Repeated goodbyes were very stressful for



the troops and their families. After several instances of these, some spouses said they just wanted their husbands to deploy so they would not have to say goodbye again. After their mobilization, the reserve units were usually separated from families and located at a military installation where they received training and waited for airlift, often for several weeks. Some of the training was not considered very beneficial. In one instance, training consisted of sitting in the hot sun for several hours per day, supposedly to acclimatize to heat, although they deployed to Saudi Arabia when it was cold. Many units attempted to train their non-mortuary affairs personnel (such as cooks, construction personnel, drivers, and others) in mortuary affairs duties in case they were needed. Some people were willing to be trained; for others, those who wanted no contact with remains, this training was very stressful.

In addition to problems with notification, mobilization, and training, for entire units there were incidents that started the deployment off on the wrong foot. In one case, a unit had been awaiting departure for several weeks. They had been promised a bus on which to return home for the weekend, but the trip was canceled by the commander in front of his troops when they were ready to board the bus. They were given no explanation as to why it was canceled. Some thought it was because their leaders did not trust them to come back, but the unit had had no previous AWOLs.

### **Deployment**

**Arrival.** Some mortuary affairs companies did not know where to go when they arrived, did not know to which organization they would be assigned. One company reported being assigned to five different units; another group to 13. As a result the troops felt unappreciated and the impression was created that no one cared ("We were treated like step-children.") They could not get requisitions filled because they did not belong to any organization that could be charged for the equipment or supplies. They thought they had poor leadership because the commander could not get them attached or assigned to a parent unit. For one unit, things went very well. They traveled with their equipment and were allowed to acclimatize for a week before they went to their area. They got set up and went to work right away. Other units were not even expected in Saudi Arabia and there was no equipment for them to use. Some could not find their higher headquarters. As one person put it, "There were long distances to travel; people got lost."

**Personal threats to the soldiers.** There were many personal dangers: foreign diseases, threat of heat injuries, bad water, and hazardous driving conditions. Many deaths occurred from vehicle mishaps. There were stories of people racing trucks, driving on the wrong side of the road, and drivers being required to drive for many hours when they were tired. The biggest personal threat, however, was the possible use of chemical and biological weapons by the Iraqis. A senior NCO said, "People right out of training were most worried about chemical attacks. They would say, 'I feel something on my arm!' and there were rumors that there were gases against which the mask would not protect them."

**Large numbers of casualties expected.** One company commander was told to plan for 30,000 KIA, 10% of them were predicted to occur on the first day. There were fears by the leaders that the soldiers would be worked to exhaustion. Mortuary affairs soldiers were expected to make a tentative

identification of each fatality, a dental chart, and fingerprints. Each of these steps, and others, required extensive paperwork. One senior NCO said if there had been thousands of bodies, "they would have had to allow them alcohol." He said that in Vietnam, "that was the only way they could sleep."

Most of the mortuary affairs troops had no transportation of their own with which to move casualties. One soldier spoke of his concern that the dead would not be properly taken care of and this would become a morale problem for the other soldiers. Soldiers did not want the press to hear how unprepared they were. They were afraid such news would cause grief back in the U. S.

**Fears about contaminated remains.** Mortuary affairs units had no capability of their own for decontaminating remains should chemical or biological weapons be employed. The Army chemical corps would give priority for decontamination to the living. There were many alleged plans as to how to deal with contaminated remains, but no one seemed to be confident that any firm plan had been agreed on. It was also thought that the U. S. Air Force would not fly contaminated remains for fear that the aircrew would become chemical casualties themselves. Fortunately, the enemy did not use chemical or biological weapons and no contamination was encountered. The problem of how to handle contaminated remains was part of the overall problem of how to store remains in Saudi Arabia in case air evacuation could not keep up with the demand. There were fears that refrigeration facilities would not be available for the casualties. One option at the disposal of the mortuary affairs organizations for handling large numbers of casualties or contaminated remains was to inter the dead in temporary cemeteries until after the conflict was over. This was not done and would have been difficult. The soil in Saudi Arabia was too hard in which to dig cemeteries and it was rumored that the Saudis did not want infidels buried in their sacred soil. The effect of this lack of structure was to increase the anxiety of soldiers and leaders about what they would be required to do and to lower their confidence in their leadership because no one could tell them what would be done in the eventuality of contaminated remains or large numbers of remains.

**Changes in mortuary affairs doctrine.** A new doctrine was put into place in Saudi Arabia, a doctrine for which most of the soldiers were unprepared and would create many difficulties for some of them. The old doctrine was that other logistic companies, the field services companies in the line support battalions, would provide direct mortuary affairs support to the line units while the actual mortuary affairs companies would operate collection points and temporary cemeteries (if needed). As one commander put it, "They flipped the doctrine." Under the new doctrine, soldiers would be sent out in small teams (four to seven people) to support the line companies. As a result, they were put under the control of other units and there was little or no mortuary affairs command and control in these companies. This had practical implications for the troops and the commanders. For example, it was hard to get messages and mail to them since they were located many hours away. Some could not even be located because they were on the move with their units. Some soldiers, however, were glad to get away because there would have been many work details in store for them if they stayed in their company area. Two mortuary affairs companies were dispersed with the two Corps in Saudi Arabia; the other two operated mortuaries and evacuation points.

**Lack of knowledge by superiors about mortuary affairs operations.** Troops and commanders complained that people in charge of the support commands did not know anything about mortuary affairs doctrine. This lack of knowledge led them to promise things that the people could not do. One commander said someone wanted to obligate his company to do three large missions: to operate a theater personal effects depot, maintain collection points, and the theater evacuation point.

**Support of the soldiers.** There were many complaints from the soldiers about not feeling supported by their leaders. For example, one new commander without any command experience was appointed before the deployment to lead the company. Senior NCOs asked for an experienced commander, but the assignment was not changed. This was interpreted as leadership that did not care about the soldiers by not giving them an experienced commander. Having no fixed headquarters that could support them undermined leaders' credibility with the soldiers. Some soldiers thought commanders were volunteering them for special missions in order to make themselves look good. Some commanders appeared not to be willing to speak up for their troops, especially when they were called upon to perform extra duties. One person said, "The captain put our company in somebody else's hands." One unit saw the commander of another mortuary affairs unit who was a forceful leader and imagined that his troops loved him which, in fact, they did not. They thought he was volunteering them for details.

**How the mortuary affairs specialists were treated.** Soldiers who were deployed to forward units reported many examples of lack of support. They reported having to sleep with remains and in ammunition storage facilities. For some, there was no opportunity for personal hygiene when it had been promised to them. Some were given gloves to work with, some were not. Mortuary affairs personnel were allegedly exempt from extra duties. Some were given KP; some were not. Some reported having to go immediately to KP after handling remains without washing their hands. Most people said that the supply system did not work and they got what they needed from friends they made. According to Army doctrine, remains are supposed to be brought to collection points. In some cases, search and recovery of remains required people to go into mine fields and expose themselves to other hazards in order to recover bodies.

Mortuary affairs personnel often reported that they were not welcomed by other soldiers because of their duty. We were given examples of some of the things that were said to them. When they went to pick up clothing at the central issue facility, one man reported hearing someone say, "We don't want to deal with you." When asked about the response of other soldiers when introduced to mortuary affairs soldiers they reported, "They shudder." "Don't say it." "Don't tell people what you do." "When people go to war, we don't want them to think they could get killed." An NCO summarized his view of how people who were not trained in mortuary affairs responded. "People can't handle it emotionally or are morbid about it, too curious."

**The effects on the soldiers of handling remains.** In all cases that we are aware of, the mortuary affairs personnel reported that they maintained a professional attitude and treated the dead with respect. A senior NCO thought that most of the mortuary affairs troops adapted to the challenges very well. He said, "For the people in mortuary affairs, things were rough at first. People in the mortuary were told, 'Forget everything you learned in school. Do it this way.'

They did not know the arrangements, how things would flow, did not know who was going to handle what. The geographic arrangements were not the best, but everything eventually worked out."

The soldiers provided their thoughts about the bodies:

"Battle dead are harder to deal with than 'school dead.'"

"People from the same age group are harder to deal with."

"They died so far from home."

"Handling personal effects was one of the most difficult things."

"People who came with the bodies tried to tell us personal stuff about them. I didn't want to hear it. Didn't want to know the names."

A senior NCO in one of the mortuary affairs companies who was not a mortuary affairs soldier told us that he looked at the first body received and said to himself, "It could have been me." He did not look at another body. He said that he would not help with the remains for fear that he would have dreams.

A lieutenant said:

"Some had real bad reactions. Some came to me and talked about the worst ones: maggots, bad burns. Some would not eat a meal. We had our first female case at Dhahran. My team broke down. I was affected. I started thinking about my family back home. 'Am I going to go home like that?' A female also said, 'Am I going to go home like that?' and couldn't do her job. Others thought of their mother. People did not treat female bodies different after that first one. Nobody wanted to touch it. The other thing that broke them up was Iraqi infants. People who had just had babies were pulled off. The Army picked up the wounded ones, the ones that died were brought to us."

Some of the mortuary affairs personnel took pictures of the dead children and showed them to some Iraqi parents who were looking for their children. A senior officer told us that it was his feeling that the mortuary affairs personnel had derived a lot of personal benefit from being able to tell the Iraqi families what had happened to their children. Even though it was difficult for both parties, the family would know for sure instead of never knowing what had happened to their child.

There were many enemy casualties. Mortuary affairs troops that accompanied the line units encountered hundreds of Iraqi dead on "the highway of death." Some said they interred 400-500 casualties with help of British engineers.

So-called "special cases" were difficult for the troops. Examples of sensitive cases were possible friendly fire deaths, "suspicious" deaths, and the bodies of some females. Some reported that excessive pressure was put on them not to make mistakes, especially a paperwork error, and some reported being threatened with going to jail if they made a mistake on a sensitive case.

**Coping with difficult events.** Among the coping techniques that mortuary affairs personnel employ is not to become emotionally involved with the victims. They will often advise a new worker to not look at the face. Looking at the face tends to humanize the victim. A common fear was that people would encounter the body of a relative or friend. Some workers were told, "If you find someone you know, someone else will handle it." Some reported that talking with each other helped. In one unit, a soldier reported, "There was no distinction between officer, NCO or enlisted personnel in this." However, some said that there was a positive and a negative side to letting people see their emotions, "It caused some pain and anger." Some said that they had a lot of arguments; some went off by themselves. Others did not talk about it. "Just went back to the barracks." "Sleep." "Why talk about it?" "Nothing to talk about." "Left all that mortuary stuff behind."

### **Return Home**

There were variations in the smoothness of the return home (redeployment phase). Some of the mortuary affairs units had trouble getting manifested on an aircraft while others knew their schedule well ahead of time and departed on time. There was variation also in their reception at home. The units from Puerto Rico had the biggest reception. It was said that the airport was clogged with thousands of people. For others, small unit receptions were held. Some reported that they had high expectations upon returning, some said they were too high.

Awards were said not to have been uniformly distributed and few people got any high awards. "You had to walk on water to get a bronze star." It appeared that the units that were supporting the forward units received the fewest awards. It was hard for them to get awards because the units they were supporting were in charge of the awards.

For many soldiers, the problem was one of being heard, both in the field and now. They wanted to know if anyone in the Army was concerned about learning about the problems they had faced and overcome or if they were going to be ignored. Some people complained of sleep disturbance, some said they were drinking more, and some talked of having a worse temper. Some felt that they had a loss that could not be made up such as seeing their children grow and other things missed during their absence. One man reported having to constantly check things to make sure they were done. He could not remember if he had done them or not. In general, however, it was our impression that people had taken the deployment and war in stride and, while there were many hardships, people found some personal benefit in their experiences.

## **B. Non-Mortuary Affairs Companies**

In order to understand the unique stressors associated with working with dead bodies, it was necessary to compare the experiences of the mortuary affairs soldiers with non-mortuary affairs units assigned to the region. The comparison units chosen were also tasked with support missions rather than combat assignments. Descriptive information about these non-mortuary affairs units is presented next.

### **Characteristics of Participants**

Surveys were completed by 108 soldiers, 102 males and 6 females. The median age was 25.5 years with a range from 19 to 58. Ninety-seven percent (97%) were enlisted with seventy-two percent (72%) holding the rank of E-4. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the soldiers were Hispanic, 36% were white, and 6% were black. Forty-seven percent (47%) were married; thirty-five percent (35%) were single. Ten percent (10%) had been in a mass casualty and 15% had previously worked with dead bodies.

### **Chronology of the Deployment and Stresses Encountered.**

Two additional companies which performed support duties, but no mortuary affairs work in Operation Desert Storm, were interviewed and surveyed for comparison with the mortuary affairs organizations. Both were reserve units: one was from Puerto Rico and the other was from the U. S.

### **Notification and Pre-Deployment.**

In the Puerto Rican unit, the troops mobilized three days after notification on 27 September 1990. No problems in notification or mobilization were reported. They were taken to a post on the island and training was conducted by the readiness group and their battalion. Their biggest problem, prior to and during the deployment, was the lack of equipment. Some items were needed that were never obtained. The trip to Saudi Arabia was uneventful. They made one quick stopover in Germany; however, they were not expected in Saudi Arabia.

The second unit was also a logistics unit, but was from the U. S. This unit seemed to have had many more troubles than the one from Puerto Rico. They began to get ready in August of 1990, but were not activated until November. Some people tried to avoid the deployment. One person stepped out in front of a car and was injured; another cut off part of a finger. Both persons went on the deployment. The unit had to pack and unpack several times and there were several "false goodbyes" which were hard on soldiers, but especially on spouses and families. After mobilization, they moved to an active Army post for 60 days of training. At this time, they lost their company commander due to illness and an active duty captain was put in charge of the company. He was called "an authoritarian leader" by the soldiers. Some resented his leadership style while others appreciated it saying that he should be credited with taking them over and bringing them all back without any deaths or serious injuries.

## Deployment.

The Puerto Rican unit was billeted on the mess hall floor the first night. The second day they were sent to another area where they waited three or four days before being moved to their first duty location. Their first mission was to support another logistics company that was part of an active Army unit, but they were not fully utilized. There was a lot of time to do other details; the soldiers were very dissatisfied. They performed guard duty, digging foxholes and bunkers, setting concertina wire, and assisting where and when necessary. This arrangement continued until December with the active Army unit actually performing the mission. Their duties changed dramatically when they moved close to Log Base Charlie in January. In this case, they were in charge of another unit, the reverse of their situation for the past three months. The soldiers were now very busy, from 0600 to 1700 or later every day; they were described as much more satisfied than they had been. They were 84 soldiers servicing 22,000. After the end of the ground conflict, they had even more business and sometimes working for 24 hours straight. They were not exposed to hostile action. They returned to Puerto Rico in April 1991.

The second unit sent an advance party over to find them a location. This was an equipment-heavy unit which was only 30% mobile and hence needed a good fixed location. The main base of the company was set up at Log Base Echo on 9 February 1990. "We were given 72 hours to prepare for combat. We ran for 24 hours a day and got it done. People were eager to do their jobs." They were supposed to follow the combat, but never did because the ground war was over so quickly. They could hear artillery going off, but were never exposed to any hostile fire. During the balance of the time at Log Base Echo, they were short on equipment to perform repairs. Equipment had to be scrounged and cannibalized and many more personnel problems were reported. Some of these involved rumors about the unit that were passed from the soldiers to the spouses back at home. Complaints about the conditions resulted in a congressional inquiry and a number of investigations of the commander, but nothing was substantiated. Some senior NCOs in the unit called some of their comrades "crybabies" who complained about rumors and situations that did not deserve complaints. They said that the unit had had "a lack of discipline and mental preparation." The veterans in the unit helped them overcome these problems. They stayed at Log Base Echo until late May when they were given a new mission which was to perform extensive equipment maintenance and support for a large unit. They moved to King Khalid Military City (KKMC) where they worked some 18 hours per day in the heat. One person said, "The tanks were so hot you could not touch them." They remained at KKMC until the end of July. During this period, some soldiers were not eating and drinking properly and others got in trouble for stealing from the Saudis. Three were arrested and given dishonorable discharges. The unit finally returned to the U. S. and was released from active duty in August 1991. They returned to drills in September, but attendance was poor. They had left all their equipment in Saudi Arabia and there was nothing for the soldiers to do but administrative duties. Some of the equipment took a year to be returned to the unit.

## Return Home

Both units reported that the trip home was "fine." Some equipment was lost and it took several months to get it back, but it was all returned eventually.

The biggest problem reported was that prior to the war most of the soldiers had not been away from their families for a long time; the deployment was rough for them for that reason. When they returned, attendance at drill was low for several months, but it returned to about 90% one year after their return.

Awards were a problem for both units. Few people received an award higher than an Army Commendation Medal. The perception was that Bronze Stars went to leaders whether they seemed to deserve them or not. Promotions were also a problem in both units. People did not know about changes in regulations nor did they know how to do the paper work to get a soldier promoted. Many soldiers missed opportunities that were closed when they returned home.

## **Mortuary affairs**

### *Summary of Response Frequencies*

The duration of time worked in a mortuary was from 1 to 7 seven months. Participants reported handling between 1 and 500 bodies. The few people who handled 300-500 bodies (only seven soldiers reported handling more than 200 remains) were those who assisted with burials of large numbers of enemy soldiers. The median number was between 60 and 68 bodies. The mortuary affairs soldiers who handled bodies were only slightly more likely to have had prior experience in handling the dead (53%) than those without such prior experience (47%). Forty-two people in the mortuary affairs units (27%) reported handling no bodies, but among the mortuary affairs soldiers, only 13 soldiers (14%) handled none. Among the non-mortuary affairs soldiers, 56% handled bodies. Only 29% of these soldiers had had prior experience in handling bodies. We asked participants to rate the stress of handling remains on a seven point scale, where 0 was "Not At All" and 7 was "Extreme." Twenty-two percent (22%) reported feeling stressed at a level of six or seven. Twenty-two percent (22%) of mortuary co-workers were rated as "Very supportive" while 24% of co-workers in unit to which they were detailed were reported as such. Eighteen percent (18%) reported the stress of being detailed to another unit as "Extreme." Forty-seven percent (%) reported that they would want to work detailed to another unit again.

Supervisors in the mortuary were reported as "Very supportive" by 20% of the respondents while 16% of supervisors in detailed units were so reported. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the soldiers in the mortuary affairs units reported that they would want to work in a mortuary again. When we asked only those soldiers whose career field was mortuary affairs, the percentage increased to 53%. Thirty-seven percent (37%), when asked if the bodies they were working on "Could have been me," responded "Very much." Forty-percent (40%) reported feelings of sadness when looking as the fatalities; 20% reported feeling angry. Using this same scale, fifty-four percent (54%) rated the stress of being away from home as a six or seven. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the participants rated their spouses as "Very supportive." Sixty-three percent (63%) rated their



families as "Very supportive." Sixty-five percent (65%) said they had talked to their spouse or significant other about their work in the Gulf; 61% said they had talked to someone in their unit about it. Thirty-eight (38%) reported that there had been family problems while they were gone; 18% reported family problems since they returned. Fifty-one percent (51%) reported that there had been an adverse effect on the life of the respondent or his/her family as a result of their service in the Gulf. Forty-percent (40%) said that their life had not returned to normal in two months or longer since their return from the Gulf. Eighteen percent of the participants reported physical problems since their return, 8% reported emotional problems for themselves, 2% reported emotional problems in the family, and 23% of the respondents reported feeling in need of medical care, but had not obtained any. Sixty-one (61%) percent reported that something positive had come out of their experiences in the Persian Gulf.

### **Reactions Noted at the Height of the War.**

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate their responses at the height of the war on a four point scale where 0 was "Not At All" and 3 was "Often." time. We report those reactions which were endorsed at a level of "Often" by 20% or more of the respondents.

- \*Thirty-six percent (36%) "tried to remove thoughts about the casualties from my mind."
- \*Twenty-eight percent (28%) "tried not to think about the casualties."
- \*Twenty-seven percent (27%) "had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep."
- \*Twenty-six percent (26%) reported that they "were irritable."
- \*Twenty-five percent (25%) "tried not to talk about death or bodies."
- \*Twenty-three percent (23%) felt "lonely or blue."
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) said "I thought about the casualties when I didn't mean to."
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) felt "very energetic."
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) felt "tired."

### **Reactions Noted the Week of the Questionnaire**

A wide range of symptoms were noted when the companies were surveyed, three to five months after their return to the U. S. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked if any of the following symptoms had bothered them in the past week and on a five point scale where 0 was "Not At All" and 4 was "Extremely." For this report, we selected the level of 20% of the group that said a symptom was bothering them "Quite a Bit" or "Extremely"

(scale scores of 3 or 4). The symptoms responded to and the percentage of the population reporting these levels of distress are noted below.

- \*Forty percent (40%) reported worrying too much.
- \*Thirty-two percent (32%) felt that other people were not giving them proper credit for their achievements.
- \*Thirty-one percent (31%) reported early morning awakening.
- \*Twenty-eight percent (28%) had experienced unpleasant thoughts that would not leave.
- \*Twenty-eight percent (28%) reported restless sleep.
- \*Twenty-five percent (25%) reported trouble in falling asleep.
- \*Twenty-four percent (24%) felt that other people could not be trusted.
  
- \*Twenty-four percent (24%) reported lower back pains.
- \*Twenty-four percent (24%) reported feeling blocked in getting things done.
- \*Twenty-four percent (24%) reported feeling lonely.
- \*Twenty-three percent (23%) reported the need to double-check what they did.
- \*Twenty-two percent (22%) reported having headaches.
- \*Twenty-two percent (22%) felt low in energy.
- \*Twenty-two percent (22%) reported feeling tense or keyed up.
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) felt easily annoyed.
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) reported temper outbursts.
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) reported having the urge to break or smash things.
- \*Twenty-one percent (21%) felt less interest in activities once important to them.
- \*Twenty percent (20%) reported hurt feelings.
- \*Twenty percent (20%) reported nervousness or shakiness inside.
- \*Twenty percent (20%) reported feeling uneasy when people watched them or talked about them.

*Summary of Written Commentary*

The questionnaire allowed the respondents to provide written comments. Questions were asked about an individual's military job in the Gulf, problems encountered in handling remains, problems with the unit, how they attempted to reduce stress, if they would work with that unit again, whether anything positive had come out of their experiences, effects of their deployment on family life during and after the deployment, whether they had talked to anyone at home or in their unit about what they did in the Gulf, and whether their life had returned to normal. (Soldiers' assignments to occupations other than mortuary affairs are indicated in parentheses when pertinent.)

**WHAT WAS YOUR MAIN JOB IN THE MORTUARY/PROCESSING POINT?**

"To identify, process, and evacuate remains."

"My job is to plot mass temporary cemeteries as a surveyor, but since I didn't have to plot any, I helped with the remains. I went to hospital for pick-up, off-loaded at transition point and helped to prepare for identification." (Respondent was a surveyor)

"Recording identification media on the proper forms and bagging."

"Equipment records and parts specialist."

"Transport remains from cooler to processing area." (draftsman)

"Evacuation."

"Transfer remains from stretchers to processing area, transfer cases and refrigeration vans."

"Processing team leader."

"Checking the bodies for ID."

"Checking personal effects on the remains."

"We would do an inventory on the remains and wash their faces and hands up so they can look presentable."

"Take finger prints. Check ID with the face."

"Processing dead people."

"Check the wallet for personal effects."

**"Handle dead body, pick up dead body, inventory dead body, driving dead body."  
(construction equipment repair)**

**"Doing the paper work and putting it in the computer to ship home."**

**"Clerical, processing remains."**

**"Supervise, but with the low number of workers, I worked also."**

**"Do tentative ID and inventory personal effects and property."**

**"Moving bodies and looking for IDs on bodies." (carpentry and masonry specialist)**

**"My job varied. Sometimes I processed remains, other times I carried them into the mortuary, but my primary job is drafting."**

**"Personal effects, finger printing." (cook)**

**"Checking remains for documents."**

**"We made sure that all the paper work was correct and accurate, assisted in fingerprints and moved remains from stretcher to the transfer case."**

**"My main job was putting the remains into a transfer case and shipping them to the aircraft."**

**"Inspecting remains for any explosives or weapons that may still be on remains."**

**"Motor sergeant."**

**"Carpenter of the battalion." (carpentry and masonry specialist)**

**"Supply for the unit."**

**"Maintenance."**

**"Heavy equipment operator and service support."**

**"Processing the paperwork. Insuring all documents were present." (unit clerk)**

**"Administrative paper work."**

**"Details, guard duty."**

**"Heavy construction equipment operator. Details."**

**"Supply officer."**

**"Mechanic."**

"Personnel officer."

"First sergeant - assisted my soldiers in all areas."

"Carrying cases."

"Sergeant major - I would talk to the group processing remains in order to find out how they were reacting."

"Officer-in-charge of eleven Army personnel who processed the deceased and their personal effects."

"Mortuary administrative/operations officer."

"Commander - quality control of processing."

#### **WHAT OTHER JOBS DID YOU DO IN YOUR AREA?**

"Deuce-and-a-half driver, HUMV driver, guard duty (a lot), K.P. and some others."

"I took grid coordinates and azimuths of the Iraqi burial site, compound transition point and helipad transition point." (surveyor)

"I identified remains, inventory personal effects of remains, fingerprint remains, sanitized/cleaned remains."

"Assist in searching remains for ordinance. Help in the filling out of forms. A basic, all purpose person."

"Cleaning bodies."

"We made a little cemetery to bury the Iraqis that we had processed and then got a chaplain to pray for them."

"I prepared transfer cases, pouring ice in boxes, identifying cases, and putting them inside the freezers."

"Processed remains from a boiler blowout aboard a Navy ship."

"Work schedules, case files, location set up, troop welfare, process remains."

"Transmitted casualty reports to CONUS. Acted as purchasing authority. I was on the battalion staff as advisor to the battalion commander."

"Handled the deceased. Loaded into transfer cases." (draftsman)

"Help other soldiers on the operation. In charge of all mortuary supplies, drew up unit SOP and job descriptions for Saudi war time." (supply sergeant)

## *Stress and Coping with War*

"Overall supervision of the processing team."

"Clean the remain, wrap the hands, put in body bags."

"Additional duty as trucking company CO, redeployment center officer-in-charge." (OIC)

"I had to handle enemy dead and Iraqi women and children."

"We had to handle enemy dead and Iraqi women and children as well. Checked the deceased for ammo and identification and explosives."

"Maintenance. Fix various utilities and mechanical problems, also help with moving some remains, litter carrier, carry transfer cases." (cook)

"Promote sanitation and safety, guard duty, waste disposal, rapid response team."

"Administration. Processing information in the computer on each remain." (cook)

"Drafting work, set up area." (draftsman)

"Burnt crap, filled shower points."

"Coordination and supervision."

"Receiving clerk."

"Made sure team did job accurately."

"Logistics officer for the Quartermaster Battalion. OIC humanitarian aid missions to Kuwait."

"Maintain statistics in battalion headquarters."

"Guard."

"M-60 gunner, truck driver."

"Submit and process requisitions. Property accountability. Transportation coordination."

"Shit detail, trash detail, guard duty, mail clerk." (construction equipment repair)

"Carpenter."

"Heavy equipment operator and details."

"My original MOS is technical drafting specialist and I only did this for about 3-4 weeks."

"Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons training." (NBC)

"Fill sand bags, put up tents, guard duty."

"Kept up with the personal welfare and activities of the 11 personnel."

"Wheel vehicle mechanic."

"Helped postal company and ran hotel."

"Everything that dealt with maintenance."

"KP."

**WHAT MILITARY JOB DID YOU SPEND MOST OF YOUR TIME DOING?**

"Working vehicles."

"Commo and waiting. I felt like a vulture waiting for something to die sometimes."

"I am a soldier. I did everything. I did not spend time thinking or timing myself on what job I spent more time on."

"Mechanic."

"Supply."

"Guard duty."

"Training elements of infantry division on the procedures of mortuary affairs."

"Computer training for mortuary affairs." (equipment records and parts specialist)

"Training Navy and Marine personnel to process remains."

"Mortuary administrator."

"Personal effects."

"Talking to soldiers." (senior NCO)

"Maintenance."

"Commander and mortuary officer."

"Graphics specialist."

"Driving."

"A little of everything. Mainly direct support."

"KP."

## ***Stress and Coping with War***

**"I got to drive a deuce-and-a-half and also did some supply dispatch and distribute food to some of the units that were there."**

**"Practiced my job. Drive five ton truck for to pick up fuel and water."**

**"Driver."**

**"Supply-related jobs and others."**

**"Giving classes in mortuary affairs procedures and details."**

**"Working on the files of the remains."**

**"Heavy equipment operator and details."**

**"Mortuary/processing remains." (draftsman)**

**"Maintenance and food service. Moving remains and transfer cases." (cook)**

**"As commander, updating the unit with more information on a daily basis, and seeing to their daily needs and welfare."**

**"Supervising squad-sized processing team, paperwork checking for accuracy and correctness."**

**"Food service." (cook)**

**"Details, cleaning, lifting, building."**

**"NBC, supply."**

**"Being a carpenter." (a mortuary affairs soldier)**

### **WHAT PROBLEMS, IF ANY, DID YOU HAVE IN DOING YOUR WORK WITH THE BODIES?**

**"Working with babies and old women."**

**"I have a brother, relatives and a lot of friends in the military. I guess seeing somebody I knew come through the transition point." (surveyor)**

**"Slept less."**

**"The only problem was the shock. The kind that I saw were very mutilated."**

**"It got to me once in a while. I felt sorry for all of the people that died." (heavy construction equipment operator)**

**"It was shocking to realize it could have been me."**

**"Other than the sadness of fallen comrades due to accidents and suicide, the only problem was in Kuwait when we were recovering some Iraqis, the**



Kuwaitis kept firing all around us celebrating. Bullets were bouncing off vehicles and some came very close."

"The main problems with working with the bodies is the smell and if you start thinking about their families you can get kind of upset."

"Nightmares."

"Being on the front line. Going into mine fields. Having TV reporters asking you questions while trying to pick up pieces of what used to be somebody's body."

"When I started the work I did not have any knowledge of it and I had to learn how."

"When I worked with a baby. This made me feel miserable and very sorry because it reminded me of my little daughter."

"I lost appetite. I refused to eat meat, especially red meat."

"That the people from the same company (deceased's company) take the deceased's identification away before we check the body."

"None."

"The leaders in the group didn't look out for us and didn't care."

"There was one major problem. One afternoon we had to do a search and recovery. That wasn't the problem. The problem was going out there without an explosive ordinance team. That one afternoon we got lost and there was mines all over the place."

"No problems."

"When we got to the place, we found only bones because the dogs ate it all. I saw a lot of remains in the Kuwait area, but we never dealt with it."

"Touching them and moving them around."

"Officers disorganized."

"I see them in nightmares."

"Too much blood."

"At first, having to see so many bodies at the same time, but then I got used to them. The battalion we were attached to expected too much from us."

"We did not have most of the equipment that was needed, but we understood that and worked with what we had. Other than that, everything went well, thank God."

"Very scared."

"Looking at the remains. At first it was kind of hard, but I learned to accept it."

"None."

"Fear of moving."

"Looking at them, smelling them, thinking of them alive."

"Going to sleep after I saw them and thinking it could easily have been me because of the environment we were in and knowing their families would be notified that their loved one would not be coming back alive."

"Could not stand the smell."

"The problem I had was that this was not what I was trained to do in the U.S. Army. Sure, I went to the classes before we mobilized, but I also spent 16 weeks preparing to be a draftsman and then spent most of my time as a mortician."

"None, except for the first view."

"Frightened at first, but managed to deal with it."

"Some nightmares and dreams." (cook)

"Depression, stress." (cook)

"Looking at the remains. At first it was hard. Later I learned to accept."

"I felt sad. It affected me a little bit because I knew I could be in the same situation (dead)."

"Not having the right equipment for the job -- finger printing a remain with the available equipment, but there are some that are unique and no way can be finger printed with the equipment available."

"If tents are to be used for mortuary work, we need the medical type with air conditioning. The individual units are too small to deal with mass casualties arriving at the mortuary. The entire unit (everyone) had to assist when it became busy. Long hours."

"Didn't want to think that these people were dead, the odor and the way the bodies look sometimes make me sick, the only problem surfaced when I went on R & R. (I watched people on the dance floor and started to picture them all in body bags, and thought about their families)."

"I didn't like thinking that these people were dead." (draftsman)

"The odor and the way the bodies look sometimes makes me sick." (supply sergeant)

"No problems at all."

"Thoughts about their families."

"I had a hard time thinking about their families."

"Bodies heavy, often lifting in awkward position. Psychological - working with personal effects."

"I was afraid of catching any diseases I might catch from the remains."

"None." (cook)

"Seeing them."

"The smell. They had been floating for two weeks."

**WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS WERE THERE WITH YOUR WORK OR YOUR UNIT IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

"In Persian Gulf I worked on trucks and generators. The problems I had over there was poor leadership from my chain of command."

"With my work -- no problem. With my unit -- morale, lack of supplies, backstabbing, back-biting, and hoarding among all large teams of certain supplies ( not all supplies)."

"The lack of communication in our unit caused a gap between the collection points and an air of competitiveness instead of unit cohesion."

"Not enough support from our higher headquarters."

"Poor leadership, cliques (a lot of cohesion among these groups), racism, low morale."

"The supply system was not that great at all. "

"Were not able to get parts to fix our equipment."

"The overall concept of a seven member collection-point team. The constant relocating of the collection point. Being attached to a reservist water purification battalion."

"No cohesion and lack of communication."

"During the war I felt as though we could have had better working equipment. We were all split up into small groups and our close bond we had as a company was broken and a lot of hostility occurred between the soldiers, NCOs and officers."

- "Incidents of a serious nature where individuals pointed loaded weapons at others. Officers making statements to the effect that certain teams were made up so that they were going to die for sure if the ground war started."
- "Not knowing what was going to happen next. Not knowing who was running the show, where we would get support from, if any."
- "Trying to advise other people who are not mortuary affairs to do the right thing."
- "Lack of proper equipment. Favoritism by higher-ups with stateside units. Insufficient transportation. Prejudice on the part of stateside units."
- "Disorganization and lack of communication to keep the troops informed."
- "To handle transfer cases manually was really hard. In addition, our unit needed more personnel badly. If we had had to process more remains the mission would have been almost impossible to accomplish."
- "The worst was that the high ranking NCOs and officers there were afraid of making decisions and not knowing what to do."
- "Lack of response toward the enlisted."
- "We were putting our remains in this broken down G.P. medium tent with holes all over the tent and not even any light to work with. And about our unit, I think we were missing out on what was most important and that was communication."
- "My unit do not have any leadership."
- "A lot of disrespect from the soldiers to the NCOs and NCOs to lower ranks."
- "We were basically left in the dark about our unit working as a whole or being attached to other units."
- "They split our company."
- "Hygiene."
- "Fear of contamination and the smell on the clothing; no laundry."
- "Our company commander never stood up for us. Everything they told him was OK without thinking what was best for us."
- "The problem was the way they put the unit to work. The whole unit was disassembled to different units."

- "The weather. We were trained for a hot weather climate and prepared for it. But we were not prepared for cold weather coming from a hot climate. We thought it wasn't necessary (the hot weather training)."
- "Heat and being bored. Taking showers outside in the cold."
- "A lot of miscommunication."
- "Putting in the new doctrine in the middle of a war. Transportation low on the list. Air Force and Army trying to work together, different standards."
- "Long hours."
- "Uncertainties, confusion at times."
- "Unorganized and incompetent higher command."
- "Time schedule, work load, work area."
- "Leadership, morale."
- "Personality conflicts and being with scared soldiers."
- "Being commander in itself was stressful enough."
- "We had problems with our chain of command. Not enough materials to work with. They had us doing all kinds of details instead of working in our MOS. Our unit was broken up into 17 collecting points and we were not prepared for that. We were prepared to work as a unit."
- "Leader (officer) discipline."
- "Our commander and lazy people."
- "Our CO complicated things by involving himself in business that he had no business being involved in."
- "To try to get supply was a real problem." (supply sergeant)
- "No direction. Poor leadership. No one prepared to handle deceased the correct way."
- "Preparedness; difficulties with commanders and disorganization hindered work."
- "Problems such as lack of support from our OIC. Working or processing little children."
- "Lack of manpower in the unit made everything difficult; example, we were doing three tasks at one time."
- "The CO was very good at micromanagement."

**WHAT DID YOU DO TO REDUCE THE STRESS OF YOUR WORK WITH THE DEAD?**

"Listen to music."

"Talked to God."

"Prayed."

"Read a lot."

"Card games."

"Played volleyball, wrote letters to my wife."

"I think a lot before the G-day."

"Think a lot by myself and honestly I really don't know."

"There was no stress."

"Spent time alone to think."

"Rotated jobs."

"Looked at each individual as if they were just sleeping."

"Try to keep everybody as cheerful as possible."

"Slept a lot."

"Walked a lot. Talked to other individuals that had problems."

"Spent time with my fiancée. She was there with me."

"Talking with my friends and playing dominoes."

"After working in a funeral home for some time, the stress of working with human remains was minimum."

"I tried to keep my mind relaxed."

"Worked on computer and as a commander my mind was always occupied."

"Wrote letters."

"I take this like a regular job, somebody has to do."

"Watch TV in a recreation tent."

"Play cards, baseball, basketball."

"Pray, read letters from my family and listen to my walkman. Sometimes we would play cards. Spades was the game we would always play."

"Nothing. Just do your job as a professional."

"We talk about it and made corrections to one another so that there will be no mistake made."

"Read my Bible, talk to my subordinates, and try to remember all the things my uncle told me (he is a Vietnam veteran with five successful tours and was wounded twice)."

"Think about Puerto Rico."

"I slept. Had nothing to do. I had to stay awake because we never knew when bodies would come."

"I just did my job, dealt with them, but when I didn't work with them I didn't think about them."

"Sometimes I stopped by the unit commander where I was and talked to him about my problem. He helped me a lot."

"Talk about the funny things that happened in the unit, read the Bible, visit our other unit members that were in a different collection point and talk about the good days, etc. etc."

"Nothing. Try to deal with the problems."

"I just got away from everyone."

"Joke a lot."

"Didn't think about it."

"Tried not to think about it, just looked forward to making it back home."

"I thought happy and peaceful thoughts."

"Always thought of loved ones back home."

"I started drawing more than usual. (This occupied more of my time and helped keep my mind off of some of the things that were happening around me)."

"Didn't do paperwork. Try not to remember faces."

"It was not stressful from working with the dead; anyway I don't think that caused the stress."

"Kept my mouth shut."

"Organized teams to go to the gym. Time off for resting and watching movies."

"Talked to people, watched TV, purchased fans to try and stay cool, slept, did physical training (PT). Working with dead bodies was not stressful; it was

the people that I was working with that made it stressful. Wrote letters home."

"Talked with others and thought a lot."

"There was nothing a person could do to reduce stress because our CO was always volunteering us to do other things, thus building more stress."

"I didn't have much stress, but if I did I would talk to the people I felt I could trust."

"I was too tired even to think about the remains." (carpentry and masonry specialist)

"Trust in the Lord. Read my Bible. Family and friends support."

**IF YOU WERE DETAILED TO ANOTHER UNIT TO PERFORM MORTUARY AFFAIRS DUTIES, WHAT PROBLEMS, IF ANY, DID YOU HAVE?**

"Asking the commander to I.D. the kid."

"Less sleep. Odd dreams."

"They did everything totally opposite of what I was taught. They weren't as precise as I expected."

"The unit did not support our collection point as well as they should (i.e. transportation vehicles for remains.) Did not reward soldiers for a job well done, with little knowledge of the mortuary affairs. When award recommendations were turned in many of them were sent back because the awards board members felt we were "just doing our job."

"Too much unauthorized officer, CID, and MP interference."

"When a dead body came in they would take pictures and make jokes."

"Seeing limbs blown off bodies. Body parts all over the place."

"They took us to do a lot of jobs that did not have anything to do with our MOSs."

"At the beginning, they wanted us to work in their MOS and not in ours and did a lot of their details."

"No problems."

"We did not receive the support necessary. Basically everything was done by our group of four mortuary affairs personnel."

"In the battalion, there was not much water. Sometimes we worked night and day without having any water at all, to wash ourselves and clothes."



"The identification."

"It is a big difference when we play with doing and real bodies."

"Transportation and paperwork."

"Poor working facilities, not enough equipment, little support from the supervisor."

"Cooperation."

"Dealing with it."

"Just try to maintain my people's temper. Trying to work with the Air Force. Differences in standards (theirs higher, ours real low)."

"Thinking it could be me in the bag."

"The officers interfered by limiting us to what they wanted us to do and not let us do the job that was required."

"Developing the nerve to be in the same room." (equipment records and parts specialist)

"None."

"The smell and the weight." (cook)

"They had us doing details, guard duty, also we were supposed to get some people from that unit to help us and we only got one."

"I had to train the E-6 and officers in the handling of the dead. They were wonderful in their learning and very helpful."

"I did not work with the bodies, but we were all required to complete our assigned duties as well as run the redeployment hotels and sort mail at the post office."

"Areas of responsibilities not well defined."

"They gave us little support."

"Nobody knew what to do or where to go, too many chiefs very few Indians."

"Our unit did not work as a unit."

"The unit we were attached to did not provide adequate meals for the soldiers."

"No communication, lack of support and supplies."

"Too much emphasis on dress codes."

"Problems with the staff because they don't know what's going on."

"Prejudice and persecution. Abuse of power by superior command and poor support from other unit."

"Insufficient staff personnel."

"They did not supply our team with the equipment necessary."

"They won't let us go!"

"We don't get too much from the people that they send us to."

"We were told that the unit we were going to be with was going to give us what we need, like tents, light, and men to help us do guard duty and when the conflict started we just had to deal with what we had."

"No problems."

"I got lost in the desert for three days in a convoy with the 1st Infantry Division."

"They seemed to show some sign of racism. Maybe I could be mistaken. No unit likes to have mortuary affairs people around. It's bad for morale (so they say)."

"Morale, leaders don't care, leaders leading convoy got lost twice and soldiers started to panic. first sergeant and commander didn't take good care of soldiers. They make a lot of promises and never accomplish them. All items that came for troops' welfare were kept by commander, first sergeant and platoon sergeants."

"Lack of communication about what's going on."

"I did not get any merit from them for the job I did."

"About what they were going to do with remains and personal effects."

"Communication was the problem."

"The Army didn't take mortuary affairs work seriously. Suddenly they changed."

"None that I know."

"Before the war they treated us as detail people."

"Members didn't trust the information that was put out by the unit commander."

"Yes, too many people were telling you how to do your job."

"Maintaining the same standard of working and living conditions."

"Not knowing where we were going and stress along with temper flare ups."

"After we did our first bodies they relieved us of our duties and we became a detail unit (guard duty, shit detail, etc)."

"Uncertainty."

"No support for recreational activities such as TV and VCR."

"Not enough people in our unit. Should be a larger unit so there would be less pressure on each person for details, creates less stress."

"Unit members did not trust the information they were being given by their leaders."

"Work was no problem. It's unnecessary bull that myself and the subordinates went through. Hearing and seeing things that was just not right."

"They didn't want to understand the importance of our job, that we were supposed to be ready to process any remains 24 hours a day. They didn't know too much about the mortuary affairs job and instead of asking us about the job, they preferred to go to someone else that probably didn't know nothing."

"No discipline and no support."

"Rumor control, working with other units, soldiers hear partial stories about going home departure dates. This caused serious morale problems."

"Long hours."

"There were a few of us who worked to exhaustion while some others lagged."

"Poor leadership, inadequate commander. He was concerned with himself and when it was all over he took credit for what I and others did."

"It seemed like they drained our resources, but spent no time replenishing them."

**IF YOU WERE DETAILED TO ANOTHER UNIT TO PERFORM MORTUARY AFFAIRS DUTIES, WHAT DID YOU DO TO REDUCE THE STRESS OF YOUR WORK WITH THE DEAD WHILE WORKING WITH THIS UNIT?**

"Read Stephen King novels."

"Played dominoes, visited with friends."

"Laugh and joke about it."

"There wasn't really much to do except spend time with one's self, and perhaps read mail, and write letters. My collection point team members and myself joked a lot to help each other relax."

"Visit other section in the unit."

"I sweep away from my mind the thing that I saw."

"Nothing."

"Try to take it one day at a time and not to let it conflict with my job."

"Play cards. Try to cook some."

"Sometimes we would invite some soldiers to come to our tent to play cards and then sit down and talk about what we did today."

"Heard radio. Wrote letters."

"I just did the best I could and kept an eye out for my buddies to make sure everyone was on the right track. Note: We were so close to each other that we originally started as a group of five and just before the ground movement started, we knew we were going to have problems with one person, so we made arrangements to send him to the rear."

"Sometimes we spend time building showers for ourselves and for other people around the battalion."

"No time to reduce the stress; we was working all the time."

"Not pay too much attention to the majors in charge."

"I read paper."

"We took different shifts of work and if I had any problem, I talked with the CO."

"Try to talk about it."

"Play cards and listen to some old music."

"Carried on with my mission."

"Stay to ourselves and watch TV (after the war). Play cards, read books, write letters, play football, volleyball, basketball (after the war)."

"Played sports."

"I also started working with a sergeant from that unit who was an expert in hand-to-hand combat and we practiced during down time."

"We argued, laughed, and joked about anything and everything. Prayed."

"Wrote letters, listened to my walkman and played games."

"Read and write in my spare time."

"Allowed myself some time away from the compound periodically."

"Every chance I got when we were off from work, I slept so that the first sergeant and the commander can do what they wanted to."

**WHAT DID YOU DO TO REDUCE THE STRESS OF BEING WITH THIS UNIT?**

"I would read the Bible."

"There is no activity that can reduce the stress of being in this company."

"Read and talked with friends."

"Talked to mutual friends and discussed our feelings."

"Played sports."

"Visit other units and try to get reassigned."

"Grin and bear it."

"Wrote home more and called when I could."

"Talk to my friends."

"Playing dominoes."

"Exercise, games, videos."

"Concentrated on goal achievement."

"Listen to music and work on computer."

"Sleep."

"Nothing."

"Hear music and read newspaper."

"Read a lot and talk about the problems with my husband."

"Read Bible, read news, read Christian books."

"Play cards."

"Stay with my group and talk about Puerto Rico and about the NCOs and officers of that unit and compare them with our NCOs and officers."

"Talk, hear radio, write letters."

"We talked together, shared problems. We were together most of the time."

"Wrote a lot of letters and called home when the chance arrived. Also trained and studied on all aspects of mortuary affairs for which I was not qualified." (construction equipment repair)

"Survive."

"Make friends."

"Try to think of my family."

"I used to go to the rec center and watch some movies."

"Be at all times with my squad and go through the manuals with them and sleep when I had the time."

"Allowed plenty of time for morale activities such as visits to the PX, finance and telephones."

"Go somewhere to be alone."

"Make jokes."

"Laugh and joke with fellow workers about things at home."

"Complain and pray."

"Gamble, write letters, read, sleep, watch TV (after the war), play volleyball (after the war), play basketball (after the war), steal showers (they gave us a shower outside with salt water)."

"Just think positive that it would all be over soon, and each day hope that no more bodies would come to the mortuary."

"Start arguments."

"Talk with other unit members, watch TV, played cards, basketball, football, and other indoor games."

"I started drawing a lot, more than usual. This occupied my time for a while, but stress was still high." (draftsman)

"Wrote letters home and kept daily diary."

"Don't think about. I'm ok, you're ok."

"Keep low profile."

"I loved the unit I worked for."

"Avoided soldiers who had rumor information. Contacted the battalion CO for information."

"Enjoyed the company of others, listened to music."

"I tried to keep busy as much as possible." (carpentry and masonry specialist)

"Just stayed busy (cook)."

**DID YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DEAD BODIES?**

**YES:**

"I felt for their families."

"I felt very sad for the ones who lost their lives, but I was very elated that the number was very low."

"The thought of knowing that the dead that came through had loved ones back at home. Especially when you look through their wallets and see pictures of their family and friends." (surveyor)

"The Iraqi dead my team worked on were located right outside of Kuwait City on what is known as "Valley of Death". We not only picked up and bagged them but we also had to bury them."

"I felt as though we should not have been held responsible for Iraqi remains. The Saudis or Iraqis should take care of their own, like we took care of our fallen comrades."

"Some of the casualties resulted from carelessness which angered me but I mostly identified with the fact the soldier had died serving the country, never to return to home and family."

"I felt sorry for the young Iraqis because their leaders lied to them and because of that they were killed needlessly."

"I watched two soldiers die in a trucking accident. One of the soldiers was pinned under the tires and weight of the truck and he was twisted but conscious, while the other had been thrown clear. This stays on my mind."

"I couldn't understand why so many people would die for one crazy bastard."

"Certain revulsion at the mangled remains."

"I tried to do the best work to send the dead bodies back home with their personal effects."

"Soreness, pity because they were human and still in the name of God we are all brothers."

"I felt great respect for each one of the casualties."

"It was very sad to see the casualty so young and the waste of their lives when the deaths were due to accident."

"I was always thinking about his or her family, how they were going to feel about it."

"Our first remain was an Iraqi soldier. I got kind of involved with him because the way he was done, no brains and I just thought about his family. He was only 22 years old and only had a picture of his brother and a letter from him. I guess that was his only relative that was close to him."

"Don't see my family again."

"I just could not explain how in this day and age people can close their eyes and look the other way in order to fulfill some maniac crazy ideal."

"They make me feel scared."

"I saw a dead body as a brother and I thought of the pain the family was suffering."

"I felt sorry for the families, especially the ones who committed suicide and the ones who had children."

"I asked myself, 'why did some die by obeying orders and others because they disobeyed?'"

"I did not think too much about it. Didn't have the time."

"It was very bad to see those things."

"Knowing the sorrow family and friends feel."

"How their loved ones would react when they got the news."

"I wondered how some of them died."

"Dreams."

"A slight remorse came over me during one particular incident. Once that emotion left, anger set in my brain over his freaky death."

"Very strange feelings go through my body. So strange I can not explain it, but the remains did not bother me."

"I felt sorry because some of them were very young."

"I really didn't want to deal with it."

"Wondered and hoped the families could look beyond this and be proud for the sacrifice."

"People take so many things for granted."

"In going through personal effects of remains some had pictures and other information that caused a concern for those left behind."



**DID YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DEAD BODIES?**

**NO:**

"A dead body is a dead body. There's nothing you can do to bring it back so I just do the processing, ship it out, and move on to the next one."

"It is a job. Feelings are meant to be kept as a minimum. I had absolutely nothing to do with the dead bodies." (equipment records and parts specialist)

"Most were unrecognizable so just considered it a job and left it at that."

"I don't mean to be cold, but a dead body does not bring any kind of feelings in me especially in a combat zone."

"He or she is in the military to fight under the U.S. government. They knew what they were doing when they signed the contract."

"It was a job that had to be done."

"I can't get feelings for something that you do professionally."

"Strange feelings went through my body that I can't explain."

"As long as I didn't know any of them."

"I only did what my job description called for in handling the casualties."

"It did not seem to affect me."

"I didn't really want to deal with it, after handling so many bodies you stop thinking about it, hope that their families would look beyond this and be proud of the soldiers."

"I did work with the bodies." (equipment records and parts specialist)

"I felt removed from what I was doing."

"After so many bodies you stop thinking about it."

"I try to take it out of my mind as much as possible."

"I stayed in the kitchen!" (cook)

**WOULD YOU WANT TO WORK IN THE MORTUARY AGAIN?**

**YES:**

"To learn more."

"The mortuary is a very interesting place to work. I enjoy my work with remains."

"That's my job."

"Not sure at this time."

"I plan to carry on a career in this field."

"It's interesting work."

"I am proud of my job and enjoy being able to provide some comfort to the bereaved family of the deceased."

"I would because most people spent thousands of dollars to learn to perform the job we do. Besides it's good training. In the civilian world you would probably make a lot of money if you were an undertaker and ran or even just assisted and worked in a funeral home."

"To learn more and maybe work in mortuary someday."

"Because death does not phase me."

"Not during wartime."

"Because I feel as if I'm helping them (the remains) even if they can't acknowledge me or my work."

"It is interesting to learn and see how some people are killed and figure out what was the cause of death."

"If it is necessary. I know now that I can handle it so I'll know what to expect."

"I'm a pre-med student and want to major in forensics. It is an interesting field to me."

"If another situation/conflict shows I would do it again for our country."

"If I have to, I'd do it again because it is just a way of expressing thankfulness to our fallen heroes and respect to our enemies."

"This I would do in a humanitarian action because those people deserve to be taken care of, what's left of them, after they bravely gave their life for what they thought was right."

"It's a job that has to be done with respect and pride."

"This is my job."

"I feel I'm very well trained in this job and I feel it is my duty to support those families back home who count on us to ship their remains home."

"Is my job and I do it."

"It was a great experience."

"Someone has to do it."

"I like the Army. That explains it all."

"I like my job."

"I don't mind doing it."

"Yes, with more cleanliness and more protection."

"If they need me, I would do it again. Not a great job, but somebody has to do it.  
Helped me appreciate life more."

"I feel prepared and confident."

"I feel it is good to help other unfortunate people."

"I now have the experience." (cook)

"Now I have experience and know I have a job."

"Only if the need arrives, but I'm not running to the front of the line to work in the mortuary."

"It wasn't all that bad." (carpenter)

"It's more of a pretty safe area to be in during the war."

"Knowing the job, what it takes to get the soldiers home to their loved ones with their effects."

"I have done it once and I can do it again. Since I know that I did my job accurately and in a timely manner, I know that the remain got the respect that it deserved."

"Yes, I want to do it for a living."

"Maybe. It depends on who is still around."

"Depends on with who I did my job with, but I hope that I don't have to do it again. I felt I was helping the soldier on his way back home."

"It doesn't bother me anymore."

"It's a job I can handle, which very few people can. I feel because of that I'm helping out the best way I can."

"I have no problem working any where the Army sends me." (carpentry and masonry specialist)

"Maybe. As long as I work with food service, it doesn't matter." (cook)

"I say 'yes' because I think I handled it."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO WORK IN THE MORTUARY AGAIN?**

**NO:**

"It's not my idea of a major career to pride oneself in."

"Not my kind of job." (surveyor)

"It does not even interest me one bit to work with dead bodies." (equipment records and parts specialist)

"I've seen enough to last a lifetime I think it's very important to recover our soldiers who are killed in combat but I don't want to do it."

"Because I'd have flashbacks to the highway of death and see all these body parts blown all over the highway. Hopefully, I pray to God to never see anything like that again."

"Because I don't want to carry cases and I don't want to see remains."

"It is not my favorite line of work."

"I don't feel like doing this kind of work."

"Not interested, it is not my field of expertise."

"Because I don't want to go to another war."

"Because what's going to happen is that I just might get a flash back and see those dead heroes again in my mind."

"I don't like to work with dead people." (combat arms soldier)

"I'm not ready to face death, not even in my own family or relatives."

"I don't want to work on the people."

"I'm not a mortuary affairs soldier."

"I am too old to work with dead bodies." (respondent was 54 years of age)

"Persian Gulf was enough to understand the job."

"If I had a choice, I wouldn't do the job again because it was a terrible experience and it's not an easy job to do."

"Never want to experience that again."

"I don't think I could handle it again. It would be very hard for me."  
(construction equipment repair)

"I don't like the smell of deceased bodies."

"Because all you see is death."

"The job doesn't fit me." (heavy construction equipment operator)

"It can become highly stressful."

"Not my type of job at all." (draftsman)

"Too depressing."

"If I could get out of it."

"Couldn't handle it."

"This is not my job and to tell you the right answer I don't like it. I did my job but I hope I don't have to do it again." (supply sergeant)

"Not for the Army or the military."

"It's just not what I'm into. I would rather be in an armor unit." (mechanic)

"I don't like to work around so much depression. It was bad enough that we were in a war-like environment, far away from home. And to work with young casualties added to the problem."

"It was my job while I was there but if I had a choice I would rather not work with deceased personnel. It is a very stressful job."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO WORK DETAILED TO A UNIT AGAIN (IF APPLICABLE)?**

**YES:**

"Maybe, because if each unit would look at us as one of them and give us the support necessary and not just look at us as some vulture waiting for someone to die so they can be ripped off. This is not what we went there to do; we are just as good as the next soldier or better."

"I'd rather work with another unit; not this one."

"It was OK, all in all."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO WORK DETAILED TO A UNIT AGAIN (IF APPLICABLE)?**

**NO:**

"I'd prefer to stay with my own unit because I know I'll have support."

"If this unit has to be detailed to another unit we need to know ahead of time and not go from unit to unit until someone finally decides to keep us. It makes us feel unwanted, and it kept us from getting items that other units had."

"I was new to this unit going over to Persian Gulf so I had to get used to working with new people once, so I wouldn't want to have to do it again."

"When you are detailed to another unit, not only do you jeopardize the welfare and morale of your soldiers, you expose yourself to the unit's prejudices regarding your job. It brings down your own unit's morale."

"Individuals from other units do not know who you are, also you don't know them and their ways of handling situations. Being with your own unit gives you some idea of how the individuals respond to some situations. War time is no time to change or move individuals with people you know nothing about. It is very important to at least be with people you know and get some type of comfort from them."

"Too little support."

"We were not required to perform our duties."

"Because of the disorganization and our supervisors treat us like animals without human feeling."

"Better to work with a unit you have traveled with and are used to."

"No, because they abuse you with details at the beginning."

"Because, what I was doing, well, my personal opinion is I can't stand to see men and women in that stage of being brutally mutilated there lying dead and that, wow, these people also have family like me. The sad thing is that they will never see their loved ones again."

"Couldn't handle it."

"Too many problems."

"I'd rather stay with my own unit."

"Would rather work with own unit."

"When we went to Saudi, we were a team and we knew basically what to expect out of each other. When we were attached to another unit there were too many interferences, attitudes and we didn't know what to expect from them and it made us question ourselves."

"Because I'm not the type of person that likes sudden changes in certain situations."

"I'd rather stay with my unit."

"Most of the people don't ever know that theirs is a job for identifying remains. Since they don't know nothing, they want to run the show their way and it's not supposed to work like that."

"Bad leadership in the unit forced me to get out of the army."

**DO YOU HAVE ANY FRIENDS OR RELATIVES WHO WERE CASUALTIES OF THE WAR?**

**YES:**

"A corporal from hometown in an accidental shooting."

"Two soldiers stepped on a mine."

"Not really a friend, but a woman we met blew up in a mine."

"All - we are as one. They wanted to come back just like me. KIA, all death, war and stupid accidents. Prayer, because I know what God can do."

**DO YOU FEEL THAT ANYTHING POSITIVE HAS COME OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE MORTUARY OR WITH THE UNIT YOU WERE DETAILED TO?**

**YES:**

"I got a patch. This is the only positive thing I can think of. To be honest I didn't really want to do anything that's required to get the dumb thing."

"I got to work with new people and learn new things."

"I feel that as a one of a kind unit we can only depend on ourselves."

"As an engineer, a mortuary affairs unit would be the last unit I would end up in or go to war. My experiences opened up my mind into reality." (surveyor)

"More experience with processing dead bodies."

"The experience in the Gulf has given me an inner confidence of knowing that I can overcome and adapt to any situation (i.e. being attached to another unit, the constant moving)."

"I have learned more about my job than I knew prior to Operation Desert Storm. I have also learned that when you are taken away from the people you are most familiar with and put elsewhere your performance is affected somewhat because that security you once had is no longer there. You are dealing with people that know nothing about mortuary affairs."

"The experience of knowing how I would react in a wartime environment and the Army job experience of processing remains from the field."

"Everyone is very supportive and wants to know more about our job."

"The group I was with got a lot closer than when they were with the rest of the company."

"I was forced to grow as a person a lot."

"I've learned that no matter how much training you do in peacetime, some soldiers cannot handle field environments. Some are good doing paperwork and that is where they belong."

"Before I left the unit they talked to me and thanked me for showing them the right way to do mortuary affairs."

"It was a great learning experience to learn to adapt to different areas, get the real feel of the military."

"Because the unit I was with was what I call 'the real army,' not like my own. I learned that you can work as a whole unit and all the high motivation levels and esprit de corps and loyalty do exist in other units. I was proud to be a part of that team."

"It has helped me deal with a lot of stress and being in a foreign land doesn't seem so scary now."

"A better understanding of human beings."

"I would be much calmer working with the deceased and I realize the respect that is given to our fallen heroes is important."

"The real value of life."

"I have gained more confidence in my abilities as a soldier. But also as a human being I have started to think/care more about other people."

"Know the procedure and understand its purpose. Learned new tasks and satisfied my goals."

"I know that I have only one life to live and that I need to do what I think is right to do. I'm more positive about life than I ever was."

"More experience and familiarization when confronted with death/remains."

"I feel that I could handle this kind of situation in the future, without a problem. Now I am a more mature man."

"My reaction towards it was better than what I expected. I first thought I would not be able to do it."

"I learned that you always have to be ready and even though it's a bad experience to deal with remains you have to always be strong."

"Now I know that the high ranking personnel in this company are not prepared to do their jobs. I saw a lot of mistakes and wrong decisions."



"Because I can transfer my experience to others in my unit that didn't go."

"I think that I can work with dead bodies." (non-mortuary affairs soldier)

"Yes, because I know what a war is and the results we have to pay for it."

"Being part of a big unit like the 1st Infantry Division was very productive to me.  
I learned many things I didn't know."

"I didn't work with dead bodies before. I had a chance and I did a great job as a rookie. If I have a chance to do it again, I'll have no problem at all."

"I learned how to be very patient with people who did not feel comfortable with our presence."

"Experience for the future."

"The most valuable and beautiful thing in the world is a life."

"Appreciate more being alive."

"I appreciate life more and give more importance to things I didn't give before."

"When I see an accident on the road. When I travel in the car."

"I learned to be a better person, got to know my fellow soldiers better. I feel better prepared to deal with different life situations."

"I accomplished mission I was given, something I thought I never could have done, something that I trained for so many years."

"I learned that everybody no matter where, should work as a team and it helps me to understand a lot of things of my civilian job."

"Everybody worked as a family."

"I met new people."

"The team I was attached to were good leaders."

"I got more knowledge on people's behavior."

"I'm not the same person I was before I left to go to the Persian Gulf."

"It gave me the chance to actually work with people in a different situation."

"I learned that I must maintain a better physical and mental condition on my own."

"Operation Desert Storm gave me experience that I never had in my job."

"Training, training, and more training could never help you with death, only the paperwork part of the job. It helped me know when the heat is on who I

can count on. But, the leadership needs to be re-evaluated, the officer program. Not an officer just because you went to college."

"Found out who your real friends are and who you can trust."

"My experiences in Operation Desert Storm have made me very, very proud of myself, loved ones, family members and friends. I know how much they all care and thought about me."

"It made me realize how good life is and also how short it can be, so now I try to live it to the fullest."

"The unit could not stick together for nothing. We were not told of everything that was going on by our superiors."

"Learn to be safe."

"You learn to appreciate living and being alive."

"I look at life more positive and I don't take anything for granted."

"I now know that I can do the job I was trained to do. I will be more relaxed if I was mobilized again."

"You study people, getting to know them under pressure."

"I learned more of my duties as a unit clerk."

"Now I value life more and cherish everyday of my life."

"It's hard to explain on paper."

"I learned to work in a group."

"I appreciate life and people more."

"A good working relationship with the battalion commander. I have learned a lot about the mortuary affairs program."

"Yes, because you learn to appreciate more."

"It gave me an unexplainable feeling that we were doing the right thing."

"When I got back home my family and me were more close together now."

"To appreciate the small things in life more than I did before (showers, hot food, etc)."

"I know I can handle the job."

"It gave me respect for life and a new outlook on the reserves."

*Mortuary Affairs*

"I learned to treasure life a lot more than I used to."

"Life is not promised, just as quick as it is given to you it can be taken away."

"I learned to handle things I didn't think I could."

"It confirmed my worst innermost feelings."

**DO YOU FEEL THAT ANYTHING POSITIVE HAS COME OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE MORTUARY OR WITH THE UNIT YOU WERE DETAILED TO?**

**NO:**

"The unit was not very supportive."

"Because half the time they never acknowledged that we existed."

"Nothing positive can come out of death except maybe leaving this crazy world."

"Because nobody recognized you for what you did."

"There is not much satisfaction a person can get when you work on dead bodies."

"Because any work in the mortuary is not a positive experience."

"Because there was no understanding."

"I have the opportunity to see the wrong side of this war and I don't want to be part of it again."

"Just bad feelings."

"I only handled three bodies and I didn't like the smell of their dead carcasses and body fluid. I work with heavy equipment."

"No, because some things cannot be taught."

"I ask you, what can come out of seeing pieces of a human body?" (equipment records and parts specialist)

"I have stress and sleepless nights, under medication, also distrust in some personal matters." (cook)

"I felt nothing at all."

"Depression, anxiety, re-adjustment has been very difficult."

"It put a seven month void in my life, full of bad memories." (mechanic)

"I volunteered for the money to get away from my civilian job."

"There's nothing positive. There's no comfort. It took work and sweat."

"The only thing that comes to my mind is to get out of the system ASAP."

**HAVE THERE BEEN ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON YOU LIFE OR THAT OF YOUR FAMILY AS A RESULT OF YOUR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"I don't want to serve with any Quartermaster unit again."

"Aggressiveness."

"I've lost my fiancée."

"I'm easily startled. I toss and turn in my sleep. Easily agitated."

"Headaches, bad temper, no patience, get stressed very easily."

"Finance problems."

"My wife was a little insecure. She thought maybe that I might have been unfaithful, but I reassured her. My wife is very emotional about things."

"I have changed emotionally. I still love my kids, but something has made my marriage a little different. My wife loves me, but I can't seem to give her the love and understanding she deserves. Then again it might not even have been because I served in the Gulf."

"I missed the birth and first two months of my son's life."

"Now that I've returned home safely from a war and made it back alive, there is nothing that can really get under my skin that can really irritate me or upset me. I sort of let things roll off my back and forget about it. Whereas before the least thing would bother me. I'm only 19 years old and I've been to a war and survived. I knew I was coming back home but most of my family thought for the worst."

"Homeless and financially burdened due to my wife being deployed to Saudi and given an ultimatum of serve or get out on a chapter. We have 3 children."

"I have a temper. I don't sleep very good at night and when I first came back I had a feeling some one was out to kill me."

"Being that I'm the youngest of 13 children and the only one to go to a war, it was stressful on my whole family and myself. Two weeks after I returned home my father passed away."

"Divorce."

"It put a lot of stress on my mother."

"Loss of sleep, get angry really quick."

"I find myself wanting to just be alone."

"Can't sleep too well. I'm very isolated and feel depressed."

"I can't stay in one place. I like to hang out all night."

"I snap and argue with my wife a lot now. At any moment when she says something to me it's like I have a flashback to the war and all I think about is kill, kill, kill. When this happens I snap at my wife and get very angry."

"My mother does not like my marriage because we got married while on alert."

"Economic."

"Difficulty sleeping."

"I have become high-strung and more argumentative. I have trouble sleeping at night."

"I can't sleep at nights and still have that same old feeling again. I have a nervous problem."

"Getting back to my role as housewife and mother has been hard because of the time spent away. Things are hard to cope with because of what seems to be menial things."

"My wife asking me to get out of the reserves."

"Can't really explain everything, but I'm not the same. Everything going down."  
(13B)

"My wife and my family, they want me to get out of the Army."

"They think you are not the same one."

"Sometimes I think of the bodies and it makes me feel sad."

"The relationship with my wife. I fight with her all the time."

"My mother, she has bad nerves."

"They can't forget about it; neither can I."

"I returned home a changed person, feeling that everything was bad and it was because of the NCOs. I couldn't take care of my own needs. I had to fight alone or in a small group."

"When we returned from the Persian Gulf I felt out of place. My personality changed a lot."

"While I was there I had my relatives suffer because of the situation. My mother was healthy. She died without any cause. My wife was nine months pregnant and had a dead born child just because I was in the war."

"I changed my attitude with my wife and children since I came back."

"I cannot sleep at night. I be thinking about what I was doing over there."  
(construction equipment repair)

"I have problems sleeping at night." (cook)

"I lost my grandfather and greatgrandfather while I was away."

"When I first came back I felt uneasy about things like work. Before I left I liked my job, but when I came back I hated it."

"I'm a lot meaner, less tolerant of simple things."

"Before I left I was working. Now I can't even find a job."

"Broken relationship."

"Attitude, life style, desires, goals, motivations, career."

"Personal problem with spouse."

"The only serious adverse effect is my missing a critical semester of school which added one year to my graduation date. Thank you, Saudi Arabia."

"I have been going an average of two days a week to doctor for injuries received in the Gulf physical and mentally also creates money problems with job stress, family stress, no promotion."

"Take things more serious than ever." (cook)

"Not knowing what to expect in the Persian Gulf, I did some things I would not usually do at mobilization station. In the Persian Gulf I also learned to lie and deceive individuals for personal information or personal gain."

"At one time, I would have jumped up and down screaming at people. Now I just say whatever, agree to anything."

"Have difficulty going to sleep, a lot of arguments with my wife and kids. Also have increased the use of alcohol."

"Not receiving my pay."

"Financial, social and emotional stress both my spouse and I."

"Lost time with my three daughters and my wife. After this experience you respect life a little more."

"My father became seriously ill about me being there, I feel. We had a lot of problems over all this."

"I've been having very scary dreams, and I'm scared to sleep now." (mechanic)

"The lack of support to my family has and still is hard on me. As far as I am concerned there was no family support." (cook)

"I find myself severely depressed at times."

"Since coming home my tolerance level for unimportant matters is very low also my temper is harder to control. I find myself getting angry at almost nothing. It has changed me and my family."

**HAVE THERE BEEN ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON YOUR LIFE OR THAT OF YOUR FAMILY AS A RESULT OF YOUR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**NO:**

"We were pretty strong before this now we value each other even more."

"My family has been very supportive and the transition has been great."

"Well, I said no, but deep inside my family feels they would always know what I went through and what I saw out there. They are much closer to me and of course I'm very much closer to my kids and family."

"At first when I came home I could sleep and I kept thinking that this was a dream, that I was not really home. But, with the help of my family I rapidly came in contact with reality."

"I feel good."

"We are closer than ever and it makes me feel better about the things around me."

"Not that I have encountered so far."

"I don't feel a change, except that I walk a little slower and smell the roses."

"Life goes on with war or without war."

"Lost time with family members, family member was ill. Depression, anxiety, scared to sleep. Now having bad nightmares."

"I felt nothing."

"Things resumed as if I never left."

"I don't think nothing changed. Everything seems the same since I've been back."

**DID YOU OBTAIN ANY MENTAL HEALTH CARE DURING YOUR DEPLOYMENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

"I was sent for breathing problems and convulsions and I was sent back. I had severe headaches and was put on midrin and elavil."

"We had a briefing by a psychiatrist and stress during the war was explained and how to avoid it."

"I was hit on the head (accident), concussion, depression set in. Was sent to the U. S."

"Twice professionals came out to the unit and helped in some ways to help us with what problems we had. It is my feeling that it did not help us much."

**HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR YOUR LIFE TO RETURN TO NORMAL SINCE YOUR RETURN FROM THE PERSIAN GULF? WHAT ISSUES ARE YOU STILL DEALING WITH?**

"Aggression."

"The Army standard. Because the Army needed us to go to war, but now has come up with all the new ways to kick us out. We are good for war, but not when it isn't a war."

"I don't know if it's returned to normal or not. I've never had a normal life."

"It still bugs me to see news broadcasts. I still have memories of it. It is like sometimes I'm still there."

"I still have bad dreams at night."

"It will never be normal again. I see the faces and the destruction and the needlessness of the whole war. They should have left Kuwait alone."

"Nightmares, depression, anger, sadness."

"I can be watching TV or sitting around the house and I start daydreaming about the Highway of Death in Kuwait and about seeing all those dead bodies."

"People I go to school with do not feel females should be in service, did not support war and constantly have negative comments."

"Still working on it."

"Difficulty sleeping."

"Nervousness, lack of sleep."



"I still think about the things that happened to me over there. It is like a nightmare. There seems no easy way out."

"I have not come back to my old job. I really didn't like the job, but I'm not aggressively looking for another one."

"Still waiting. I do not trust the high ranking personnel."

"Sleeping and some others."

"I say two months, but sometimes I see their faces. I see --. She was one of the remains. But I try to forget that. Both are hard to do. I still think about that."

"I have little problems with my nerves."

"Memories of time spent there, especially when it's very quiet."

"I am still without good sleep. I have many bad dreams, too much anxiety, too much stress, post-war stress disorder."

"Sometimes have problems sleeping, think about what I was doing over there, be scared that far away from home, didn't know if I was going to be home again."

"It's still not normal and it won't be ever."

"Everybody says I've changed, but I don't see it."

"My life hasn't been the same due to the fact that I have changed and I'm trying to find myself."

"I haven't been normal. Sleep, nervousness and stress. I'm under doctor's care."

"Remembering SCUD victims."

"I am dealing with the issue of still needing some time off from military operations to concentrate on my new job assignment and to spend quality time with my family on the weekends."

"I'm still dealing with trying to get some sleep and having nightmares."

"Never received the last part of my pay that was due to me."

"Saudi Arabia syndrome."

"Still not completed. Depression, etc."

"My wife's stress."

"Death. Life taken for granted. What casualties looked like. The children killed in the Gulf."

**"Sometimes I find myself reliving the events of Desert Storm."**

**HAVE YOU TALKED TO YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

**"Talked about the war/Saudi Arabia."**

**"I tried talking about all my experiences even when people tended to ignore me."**

**"After the ground war started I had to handle the U.S. KIAs from 1st Tiger Brigade. One was a staff sergeant I knew. I still have dreams about it."**

**"Some things were hard to handle, but not hard to talk about."**

**"I talked about how I lived, what I ate, how I slept, the conditions of living in general."**

**"Chemical/Scud missiles."**

**"About the problem with the unit."**

**"I saw a little girl shot that looked my daughter's age."**

**"Attacks expected from the Iraqis. NBC and gas masks. Sleeping in tents. The cold and the dust storms."**

**"We had to talk about the dead bodies and how we took care of them."**

**"Operational tasks and interpersonal relationship with leadership."**

**"Death on both sides."**

**"It's hard to answer stupid questions like 'How many Iraqis did you kill?' 'Did you like being there?'"**

**"My wife is also in my unit and does the same work."**

**"Of how I would react if I have to deal with remains." (non-mortuary affairs soldier)**

**"Food, showers, and about the mines. Mines were a major threat to us, especially where I was at."**

**"I just explain some burial procedures that were actually done to all the Iraqi soldiers that were found during my stay."**

**"How was my job. Questions about dead people."**

**"What happened. How I feel."**

**"The sadness of the war."**

"The destruction and the way people died. Children in bad condition (injuries)."

"I talked to everybody about the job in the Persian Gulf."

"My experiences in dealing with Iraqi POWs and ordinance."

"Nothing was difficult to talk about."

"How I interact with others. How the place looks, prices and food, work relationships."

"I talked about everything that was good or bad."

"The whole experience was difficult to talk about."

"Lack of attention."

"Talk about the weather, food, people, places and things I did."

"The Gulf war comes up in everyday conversation. And when they ask about what we did I tell them in detail."

"Everything. Ups, down, bad, good, only talk to get it out."

"Told them how the remains looked."

"None. Talk about the conditions of casualties." (cook)

"Young dead soldiers."

"Mentioned about the bodies (not in detail), but more on what time they come in, where and how."

"Mortuary affairs, I told all, the weather, the people on that area, my spouse she broke up with me because she got tired of the runaround of when I would be returning home."

"At first when I returned home, it was more difficult to talk about my job."

"I told all."

"About how it was. The weather, the way people is in that area."

"Nothing difficult to talk about."

"Amount of casualties. Extent of wounds received by KIAs."

"My girlfriend grew tired of waiting for me to return two months after the war was ended which is equal to about 10 lies told to us by our CO about when we were going home. She broke up with me."

"I have told my wife all that I can." (cook)

**HAVE YOU TALKED TO YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**NO:**

"I do not like to discuss my job with my spouse. Topics about death are not easy for her to listen to therefore I keep to myself."

"Do not want to talk about it."

"I don't think they need to know sad things. It's all in the past."

"People don't talk about that topic."

"I didn't talk to my spouse about what happened in the Persian Gulf, because she is not in the military and what happened in the Gulf stays behind; that is past."

"I don't want to mention it."

"You'd never understand."

"I talked about a few things, but I don't want to."

"Because she knows what my job is."

"How most of the deaths were stupid things that happened."

"I'm trying to forget everything."

"Nothing to talk about."

"She doesn't like to talk about it."

**HAVE YOU TALKED WITH ANYONE FROM YOUR UNIT ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"I've shared experiences with my roommate as we compared the work we did with the remains."

"We were a seven-man team. We still get together and talk."

"The new soldiers in the unit that didn't go over. I talked about what we did and how we lived."

"They don't care. I am a machine to them and I have no feelings."

"We've talked about our job performance. Some collection points processed more remains than others so it's like a competition thing."

"About the world and remains."

"We are all professionals who discuss everything."

"About how bad our unit commander and others treated us."

"About how they broke us up from our unit and took us to different units. We were with active Army, and most of them didn't want us to be with them because we were reservists."

"Yes, everyone including myself have to brief one another as to what we did during all burial procedures."

"The way our unit treat us."

"Lack of war experience. We think we're prepared, but we're really not."

"With all the soldiers. They talk freely about the topic."

"We all talk about our job all the time. We laugh about some things we did and about the rough time we had over there."

"Nothing."

"What we was doing over there, if we would ever go back there again."

"I talked with my boy friend. We talked about the two places we were and how different they were."

"The unit was split in half so we talked about what happened at each location."

"None. We were just reviewing our past."

"We talked about the deal all the time. The remains are the hardest to talk about always."

"Leaving home."

"Talk to certain soldiers about certain places in the Persian Gulf."

"SCUD victims."

"Young dead soldiers."

"The unit went to the Gulf as a whole (with exception) and talking about the job is a way of relief."

"It's not difficult for me to talk about it. I like to talk about it."

"None of my unit can identify with my feelings."

"By the time I had talked to others in my civilian job, they were aware of my job and the unit's mission."

"We all like to talk about things, i. e., remember when we..."

"We talk about work."

"Nothing difficult to talk about."

"None with my unit. The others can identify with my feelings and thoughts."

**HAVE YOU TALKED WITH ANYONE FROM YOUR UNIT ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**NO:**

"None because most of us went through the same shit."

"My unit was the problem and talking to the NCOs and commander would only compound the problem."

"I don't think they need to know sad things. It's all in the past."

"I don't trust them or believe them."

"Not applicable. We were all there."

"No, they don't care about it."

"Because they were there."

"Because there were two different situations. We were split up."

"No because there's nothing to talk about. It's over and they've been there."

"Nothing to talk about. We were all there."

"They live there and I live here."

**WERE ANY FRIENDS OR RELATIVES OF YOURS KILLED OR WOUNDED IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR?**

"Some friends suffered accidents."

"A friend was in a HUMV (a military vehicle like a jeep) and had a collision, his leg was crushed. Consequently it was amputated."

**WERE THERE ANY FAMILY PROBLEMS WHILE YOU WERE IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

"My wife was in the hospital. My family had to adjust with me being there. I was a little in debt."

"Financial problems as well as marital problems as a result of the war."

- "I did not get the support from my family as I thought I would. I received only two care packages the whole while I was there. I received only four or five letters from family members."
- "Both my husband and mom got sick."
- "Mother had heart attack, son wasn't being taken care of properly, daughter lost some hair."
- "Daughter went into hospital for an operation. Son was getting sick more often."
- "My father became extremely ill."
- "Divorce."
- "My mother had a heart attack."
- "Son had medical problems."
- "My son could not handle another family separation and was sent to a children's hospital for emotional problems."
- "My son was in the hospital for a week and my aunt died."
- "My grandmother died and I didn't get to go home to see her for a final time."
- "My wife writing bad checks."
- "My mother did not tell me but my brother committed suicide while I was overseas. Also my mother has much antagonism towards me for my marriage."
- "Separation from my wife. Marriage problems."
- "My youngest son developed deep depression (he is 13). My eldest daughters dropped their grades. My wife learned how to control her hysteria."
- "My wife was pregnant and had bad complications. When she had the baby she almost died. My brigade commander would not sign my leave and my wife was alone in Puerto Rico."
- "Medical support to my family."
- "Sick child."
- "Small accidents and money problems that were solved immediately."
- "I have two small daughters and they were both hospitalized for asthma while I was in the Gulf."
- "My wife experienced deep stress."
- "My mother was very sick and I was sent back to Puerto Rico on emergency leave for eight days."

**"At first financial problem, but it was resolved very quickly."**

**"My brother had a personal problem."**

**"I had family problems."**

**"I lost my wife. She asked me for a divorce two weeks before my return from the Persian Gulf."**

**"My son was stabbed with a pencil; he is a diabetic. My other son got a rash. My youngest son acted bad in school and failed to pass."**

**"Only my wife could truly explain this, but very stressful, moving, etc."**

**"A close relative lost three of her toes to diabetes."**

**"They were there, but I did not know about them while I was away."**

**"Lack of communication, loneliness, age difference, mail never got to me until I got back home."**

**"My mother got sick and being away affected my son."**

**"Problems for my dad."**

**"My brother-in-law was living with me and my wife. He was paying about 35% of the rent. While I was in the Gulf, he moved out. A lot of his financial and personal problems have been shouldered by my wife."**

**"Money problems, family member died, my dog died."**

**"My aunt passed away in January and I did not find out till May."**

**"Family death. I had to depend on my wife to take care of assisting with this situation. I was unable to attend due to the mission."**

**"Wife had our first child."**

**"Mostly from kids and being a single parent. Could write book on life was a bitch without person to handle the stress of life."**

**"My daughter, my ex finally decided he wanted to take responsibility and didn't work with my family."**

**HAVE ANY FAMILY PROBLEMS DEVELOPED SINCE YOUR RETURN FROM THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

**"My wife admitted herself into the hospital for minor depression."**

**"Financial."**



"My wife and I argue quite a bit. I just clam up and won't argue after a bit."

"My mother is always asking for money. I guess she thinks I have a lot because I went to a war."

"Tension."

"My father passed away and now my mother is struggling to make ends meet."

"Divorce, financial debt."

"Stress and getting used to living together again."

"Adjusting to my civil job."

"Nerve problems with myself and wife."

"My parents think something is wrong with me."

"People and family think that I'm rich."

"I want to get out of the reserves because of the way our CO ran things in Saudi, but my father acts as though he will disown me if I do."

"My grandma died, so did my dog."

"No problems at all."

"We had just purchased a new home just prior to the deployment and when I returned she had it completely decorated."

**HAVE YOU OBTAINED ANY MEDICAL CARE SINCE YOUR RETURN?  
DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF YOUR CARE.**

"My feet hurt when I run or march about two miles on hard pavement and it's not due to the deployment."

"Being gone to war and come back to not find your fiancée anymore is kind of a heartbreaker, isn't it?"

"I have been having counseling with a mental health doctor to help me deal with the feelings I have now. I do think it is attributed to my deployment."

"I had a plantar wart removed and two fibroid cysts removed from my skin."

"I have a back problem, but I had the same problem before I left so I don't believe that it was related to the deployment."

"Bone spur in foot."

"Before I was deployed I had back problems. My ISG thought I was just saying that to get out of going to the Gulf."

"At first I thought I needed help, but I realized my behavior was normal for someone who had been in a war so I'm dealing with it ok."

"Depressed."

"I feel I need a psychiatrist and requested much help from the post but did not get it."

"After three weeks back at home, I caught probably one of the strongest cold/flu of my life, stomach pains, lack of energy, muscular pain (legs/arms), back pain, cough, nasal congestion."

"I can't move my right knee and my left shoulder like I used to."

"I have problem with my left heel, it seems to have been sprained while running, constant recurring migraines and neck pain from deployment and redeployment and while trying to catch up with all the undone work while I was away."

"I developed mononucleosis and bronchitis, also got an infection in my chest due to the sand. When we got back we were supposed to get a physical, but they never did because they didn't have time."

"I have been in a nervous state and can't sleep much."

"Could not sleep well; chest pain."

"I broke my right knee when I was on active duty in Germany and in the Gulf I hurt it again."

"I need an annual physical, but all the bureaucracy and paperwork involved. They don't do it. The separation physical they provide to other soldiers was the worst service I ever seen in public hospitals. All they asked you is 'look up, look down, look to your left, look to your right, okay, you are in very good health.'"

"It is related to the deployment. Probably the way they treated us."

"We need a good medical care physical."

"They gave us superficial checkups. Rather, it was all verbal, just questions."

"When we returned from Saudi Arabia we were told by the Army that we would be seen by medics, but we never got seen by them. At the moment, I feel no problems, but in the near future something might be a result from the deployment."

"I feel the need to be tested for common diseases that are active in the Arab communities and to set up a medical program to test and treat me for any traces in me annually."

"I am going to the hospital now. My unit doesn't know."

"During a SCUD attack, we were running to a bunker and my knee gave away. My knee hasn't been the same since then."

"Torn ligament in my right leg."

"I do have problems with my attention. Now my attention span is very short and I tend to forget a lot. This is something that bothers my family and co-workers have noticed." (draftsman)

"I personally think that I have a slight mental block that is holding me from getting back on track with my attitude and life style."

"All the arguments I'm having with my family and to try to forget that experience."

"Root canal problems developed while on active duty was unable to take care of due to being pregnant."

"I told doctors at ... about a knee problem I have (which seems to be getting worse), and they say my knee is fine. If it was "fine" it wouldn't pop and snap the way it does."

"I haven't felt like myself since I returned."

### Non-mortuary affairs

The following responses from non-mortuary affairs soldiers demonstrates the universality of many of the experiences shared by all soldiers deploying to Operation Desert Storm. However, in contrast to the mortuary affairs soldiers, non-mortuary affairs soldiers had very limited exposure to dead bodies.

### *Summary of Response Frequencies*

These other two logistic units were in the Saudi Arabia between three and four months. As noted earlier, they handled no bodies and were not exposed to hostile fire, but worked extremely hard. Their organizational difficulties were as prevalent as those of the mortuary affairs units. We asked participants to rate the stress of being away from family and friends on a seven point scale from "Not At All" to "Extreme." Twenty-eight percent (28%) rated the stress of being away from home as six or seven. Fifty percent (50%) of the soldiers rated their spouses as being "Very Supportive" and 60% rated their families the same. Thirty-five percent (35%) of co-workers in the unit were rated as "Very Supportive." For those who were detailed to another unit, 22% of co-workers were rated "Very Supportive." Supervisors in their own units were rated as "Very Supportive" by only 15% of the respondents while 22% of supervisors in the units to which they were detailed were rated as "Very Supportive." Sixty-three

percent (63%) said they had talked to their spouses about their work in the Gulf; 65% said they had talked about their experiences with others in their unit. Forty-one percent (41%) reported family problems while they were gone; 29% had had family problems since they returned. Forty-one percent (41%) said there had been an adverse life effect of their life or that of their family as a result of their service in the Gulf. Nineteen percent (19%) said their life had still not returned to normal two months after their return from the Gulf. Twenty-two percent (22%) reported physical problems since their return, 8% reported emotional problems for themselves, 2% reported emotional problems in the family since their return, and 21% felt in need of medical care, but had not obtained it. Fifty-three percent (53%) said something positive had come out of their experiences in Saudi Arabia.

### **Reactions Noted at the Height of the War.**

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked to rate their responses at the height of the war on a four point scale where 0 was "Not At All" and 3 was "Often." We report those reactions which were endorsed at a level of "Often" by 20% or more of the respondents.

\*Thirty-three percent (33%) "felt very tired."

\*Twenty-three percent (23%) "felt tense."

\*Twenty-two percent (22%) "felt very energetic."

\*Twenty-one percent (21%) "had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep."

### **Reactions Noted the Week of the Questionnaire**

A wide range of symptoms were noted when the companies were surveyed, three to five months after their return to the U. S. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked if any of the following symptoms had bothered them in the past week and at what level on a five point scale where 0 was "Not At All" and 4 was "Extremely." For this report, we selected the level of 20% of the group that said a symptom was bothering them at the level of "Quite a Bit" or "Extremely" (scale scores of 3 or 4). The symptoms responded to and the percentage of the population reporting these levels of distress are noted below.

\*Twenty-seven percent (27%) reported lower back pains.

\*Twenty-five percent (25%) reported nervousness or shakiness inside.

\*Twenty-four percent (24%) felt that other people could not be trusted.

\*Twenty-four percent (24%) reported trouble falling asleep.

\*Twenty-four percent (24%) felt hyper-alert.

\*Twenty-three percent (23%) felt easily annoyed.

- \*Twenty-two percent (22%) had experienced unpleasant thoughts that would not leave.
- \*Twenty-two percent (22%) reported worrying too much.
- \*Twenty percent (20%) reported feeling tense or keyed up.
- \*Twenty percent (20%) reported feeling critical of others.

### *Summary of Written Commentary*

The questionnaire allowed respondents to provide written comments. Questions were asked about an individual's military job in the Gulf, problems encountered in handling remains, problems with the unit, how they attempted to reduce stress, if they would work with that unit again, whether anything positive had come out of their experiences, effects of their deployment on family life during and after the deployment, whether they had talked to anyone at home or in their unit about what they did in the Gulf, and whether their life had returned to normal.

### **WHAT WAS YOUR MAIN JOB?**

- "Material storage and handling."
- "Operations NCO."
- "Fix/repair radios."
- "Chemical equipment repairman."
- "Guard duty."

### **WHAT OTHER JOBS DID YOU DO IN YOUR AREA?**

- "Mechanic."
- "Driver, motor pool."
- "My only job was laundry, renovation and bath platoon sergeant."
- "Guard duty."
- "Commo chief."
- "Clerk."
- "Unit supply."
- "Mess Sgt."

**"Radio repair."**

**"Unit level communications maintainer."**

**"Burning feces, Police call."**

**"Phone operator."**

**"Material storage and handling."**

**"Administration."**

**"Removing and reinstalling radio equipment."**

**"Generator repair."**

**"Reaction team."**

**"Captain's driver and company mail clerk."**

**"Guard duty."**

**"I am an overall mechanic. It breaks, I fix it. That's what I was doing. Fix what everybody break."**

**"Worked in laundry."**

**"Fabric repair specialist."**

**"Clerk."**

#### **WHAT PROBLEMS, IF ANY, DID YOU HAVE IN DOING YOUR WORK?**

**"I saw a dead Iraqi on a battlefield. He had been shot in the back of the head. I was fascinated at first then about a month later I thought about it and realized that he was a real person who at one time lived just like I do."**

**"Heat."**

**"Could not stand the environment or people."**

**"Worked with an S.O.B."**

**"Fighting boredom."**

**"Not enough spare parts to fit radios. Logistics in that area stinks."**

**"Sand storms."**

**WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS WERE THERE WITH YOUR WORK OR YOUR UNIT IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

"The company commander."

"Trying to keep soldiers spirits up about going home, but not knowing when. I counseled soldiers all the time about their attitude and tried to give them encouragement to go on."

"The head."

"There was hardly any work."

"I don't like being a mechanic."

"Low morale."

"Some members had trouble adapting to a military life."

"Personnel problems with individuals not able to adjust to active duty or combat situations. Many false complaints through IG and Congress making conditions worse than they had to be."

"Too many lies and discrimination."

"Brown-nosing."

"Congressional investigations."

"Lack of confidence in officers, female discipline (they were treated with kid gloves), micro-managing."

**WHAT DID YOU DO TO REDUCE THE STRESS OF YOUR WORK?**

"Sleep."

"Read."

"I chewed snuff."

"Exercise."

"Play cards."

"Write home."

"Gameboy. Listen to music."

"Pray."

"Practical jokes, support groups."

"Kept to self."

"Phone home and read magazines."

"Meditation."

"Used computer."

"Think of something else."

"Talk with other people on mission."

"I write and did a lot of exercise."

**WHAT OTHER PROBLEMS WERE THERE WITH YOUR WORK OR WITH THIS UNIT YOU WERE SUPPORTING IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

"No promotions."

"My unit had problems with the care of our own soldiers and racism. I worked with a lot of black soldiers and we were treated like they had some kind of hate towards us."

"No one trusted anyone."

"Lack of communication."

"They treat us as infantry guys and they thought our jobs were not important."

"Active component or should I say the battalion that we were supporting was treating us like we reserve soldiers were nothing to them."

"They were racist."

"They were goats."

"The fault of not enough materials, clothes, tents, food and vehicles."

"We were doing more details than our jobs."

"Seems that no matter how good our support to them was, it was not enough and no good."

"Lack of organization and morale support."

"Besides being racists, almost all the details were from our company."

"Lack of personnel."

"They thought our job was not important."

"There were a lot of inter-relational problems with the others. Gossip, lies, envy, jealousy."

"Too much stress in my peers."



"Discrimination because we were reserves."

"Getting materials on time."

**WHAT DID YOU DO TO REDUCE THE STRESS OF YOUR WORK?**

"Played lots of volleyball."

"Played cards."

"Thought about the time to come when we got to go home."

"Kept to self."

"Read the Bible."

"Always thinking a lot."

"Sleep."

"I talked with my NCOIC."

"Jogging, reading."

"I had to ignore and walk away or argue with that person until my stress was gone."

"Read books, papers, field manuals, tech manuals."

"Thinking on our job."

"Speak with others."

"Listen to music."

"Working."

"Passing more time doing my job and get away sometimes out of the company area."

"Music, reading, writing home, PT."

"Think of good things back home and the people who love me."

"Talked with a friend."

"Prayed."

"Listening to music and writing to my brother."

"Working with the stress of my peers helped me a lot to reduce mine."

"Look for conversation."

"Try to ignore the bad behavior of the leaders and do my best to accomplish the mission assigned."

"Playing sports."

"I put my mind on blank."

**DID YOU HAVE ANY FEELINGS OF INVOLVEMENT WITH THE DEAD BODIES?**

"I felt bad when a young fellow died at so short age."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO WORK WITH YOUR UNIT IN A CONFLICT AGAIN?**

**YES:**

"Part of being in the military."

"The unit overcame conditions and non-support to accomplish mission."

"The detachment only, the parent company incapable of combat leadership."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO WORK WITH YOUR UNIT IN A CONFLICT AGAIN?**

**NO:**

"I don't want to be in another war. I have been in two and believe it is enough."

"Too much for me to handle."

"This unit is divided into two places. There was constant fighting and arguments between the two locations."

"Too many internal problems."

"Leaders had no respect for subordinates."

"Too many undisciplined people."

"Lack of organization."

"I was discriminated against because I was a female working in a predominantly male platoon."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO BE DETAILED TO ANOTHER UNIT AGAIN (IF APPLICABLE)?**

**YES:**

"Yes, with any unit from Puerto Rico."

"A change was nice."

"That's our job."

**WOULD YOU WANT TO BE DETAILED TO A UNIT AGAIN (IF APPLICABLE)?**

**NO:**

"I think I prefer to work with my own unit better."

"Because we had a lot of problems with people of other units."

"I don't have good memories of the units."

**DO YOU FEEL THAT ANYTHING POSITIVE HAS COME OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

**YES:**

"Money."

"This was a real live hot mission. Training now can be customized by the actual experiences we encountered. Technical training must be priority, while tactical not as important. You put anyone in any type of environment and soldiers can survive with little training."

"I have received a full scholarship to ... university."

"Gave you time to think."

"An increase in unit integrity."

"It made me love life just a little bit more."

"I'm doing better in school. I learned a lot about life and the world."

"I've become more aggressive."

"The values of life, freedom, the things that I enjoy most. How rough things really could be."

"I grew up and learned how to handle responsibility."

"It was a learning experience in the deployment aspect of our unit. We also learned a lot about each other, became closer than just coming together once a month would allow."

"I learned what unit not to be in."

"I've come to realize how much better life is in the U.S."

"The unit seems to be closer. I have a better understanding of who I could trust under certain circumstances."

**DO YOU FEEL THAT ANYTHING POSITIVE HAS COME OUT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?**

**NO:**

"I was taken away from civilian life for a war that did not last. There were too many units over there doing nothing."

"This deployment cost me my marriage."

"My attitude and lifestyle have changed 180 degrees. My family says I'm so different. I have changed for the worse."

**HAVE THERE BEEN ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON YOU LIFE OR THAT OF YOUR FAMILY AS A RESULT OF YOUR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"I wanted to stay in the military and retire. Now I can't wait to get out."

"My grandfather died and the Red Cross would not let me go home for funeral. My family had adversely changed when I came back."

"I feel that I am missing something."

"People take advantage of a soldier when you are not there personally to take care of assets at home."

"I changed in ways I didn't know about until certain relationships were destroyed."

"I got divorced and my temper is shorter."

"I don't trust anyone because I'm afraid they are lying to me. I keep having dreams that they are going to call me back."

"It was hard to revert back to civilian life. Hard to express feelings to significant other."

"I was real close to my children before Desert Storm. Now they seem a little distant. The time we spent apart is lost forever."

"Lost the opportunity for a job I had been looking forward to. I even presented a letter from them at the recruitment center and the commander."

"They say that I don't pay attention or I ignore them and that I treat them different."

"I have some sleeping problems and how to respond to problems."

"All my credit was affected."

"I'm always in a bad mood, arguing with my wife and 3 children. They say I'm not the same - my personality has changed."

"(1) Problem with mind (forgetting things) (2) Cannot get to sleep properly at night."

"Stress - problems sleeping."

"The money I get from the service got me in accounts problems."

"Too much stress - they think everyday if another time like this one (war) can happen again and if I have to go again."

"It seems to me that while I was in the Persian Gulf people cared or pretended to care. Now that we're back they don't even look at you. All I want to do is be alone and not have these, even relatives near me."

"My mother and wife does not want me in the reserves and that is giving me a hard time."

"My parents are very nervous and myself, too, lack of motivation and desire to work, compared with other people and believing that I'm under-evaluated."

"Insecure about myself and family, stress."

"I am positive all the time and I feel satisfied about the family support but when they think that it is possible that I can go again to another war they are getting nervous."

"I am not the same, very nervous, aggressive and have a lot of nightmares."

"Change of behavior."

"Since I arrived back in Puerto Rico, I don't feel well in a spiritual sense. I feel empty, rudderless, I can't get used to civilian life, I had to go to the VA for help."

"Insomnia, stress, headaches."

"I'm more explosive and hyper but I can control it."

"I'm more quiet, kind of different."

"My family wants me to get out of the military because my elder son was hospitalized during the war and I was not allowed to take leave. I wanted to be with my family."

"All my family was so scared and worried about me. My kids get stressed when they see me in military uniform."

**HAVE THERE BEEN ANY ADVERSE EFFECTS ON YOU LIFE OR THAT OF YOUR FAMILY AS A RESULT OF YOUR SERVICE IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**NO:**

"Everything was the same as when I left."

**DID YOU OBTAIN ANY MENTAL HEALTH CARE DURING YOUR DEPLOYMENT IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"Hurt left knee. It got taken care of but a lot of people like the first sergeant thought I was faking."

"Strained back."

"I went to a psychologist and the results were not the expected."

"When the commander pressured to do more production in the bakery section."

**HOW LONG DID IT TAKE FOR YOUR LIFE TO RETURN TO NORMAL SINCE YOUR RETURN FROM THE PERSIAN GULF? WHAT ISSUES ARE YOU STILL DEALING WITH?**

"My anger towards the Army and Red Cross is the same. My relationships with people are very different. My attitude is very negative."

"Minor lingering issues such as not sleeping a full night's sleep. A majority of the time awake at 3 a.m."

"Relationship with my girlfriend."

"Work is boring, I used to like to go to work. I cannot wait to leave now. Family is distant. I feel like they or I will leave again soon."

"Finding work."

"Don't know. Only God will know when I leave this hell on earth. Many times I think I won't see my family again."

"Cannot forget what happened to the unit the first two months (one in Puerto Rico and one in the gulf)."

"Nervous - problems sleeping - sometimes cannot remember things."

"I need more time to readjust - I presently feel out of place. Desperate and very furious when things are not done fast. I feel like I'm falling apart. I'm strongly fighting with my personal attitude, but I think I may need help in the future."

"I still think sometimes about the Gulf."

"Nightmare, depression, bad attitude."

"Still cannot have good sleep and late at night before get to sleep."

"I continue to feel the same pressure."

"I feel depressed, I fear comparing my gulf life with the current life."

"I feel everything is urgent."

"There are days when I would like to be there for the space, clarity and the tranquility."

"Too many problems with my conduct."

"I'm still nervous. I can't sleep well and have a lot of nightmares."

"I'm anxious. Noises bother me. I dream of the devil, that my family and I are being killed."

"Still thinking about the situations and places."

**HAVE YOU TALKED TO YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"About how many crybabies there were. Always complaining. Also about the false complaints about our commander."

"My spouse wanted to know everything that happened."

"Talked about being separated during the war."

"Day-to-day duties."

"How I felt when my grandfather passed away and I could not be there."

"Helplessness and anger of being stuck in the Gulf without a mission. I wanted to kill a co-worker (a real S.O.B.)."

"None. I explained to her what I was doing."

"Most talked about topic: long hours, quality of troops I served with. I think the soldiers were great."

"About the weather, work conditions, living place, leadership problems."

"I talked about many things that happened in Arabia, but I had difficulty talking about life there ( how many hours of sleep, if I ate frequently or how I felt alone)."

"The living conditions."

"Type of work we did. Arguments with other soldiers."

"About all the risk of being in the war. They don't understand why I want to go to the war."

"Just saying how was my job."

"I talked about my experience and all the nightmare that happened to me during the time that I was there."

"But most of the time I don't explain to her too much because I don't want her to get nervous."

"About excessive work and guard duty."

"Problem we used to have in unit."

"Sometimes I dream about the sand. I would like to be there in spite of everything. I don't have a job here."

"Weather. People and way of life. Wartime. When to return home."

"Just the way of life and the difficult days in that place."

"About the country, the people, costumes and climate."

"About some young soldiers were scared about the situation out there."

**HAVE YOU TALKED TO YOUR SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**NO:**

"I just try to forget that place."

"I tried to explain to her how difficult it is to command a unit when your leaders turn their backs on you."



"Problem we used to have in unit."

"We passed through together; we can talk about everything."

**HAVE YOU TALKED WITH ANYONE FROM YOUR UNIT ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"Talked about the work that we did."

"All of them."

"My qualification in the MOS that I was doing."

"My unit was complete in Saudi Arabia."

"About the way that our officer and NCO care about us."

"Usually, I do not talk too much about my work in the Army and Reserve."

"No issues are difficult."

"To my NCOs and officers."

"Most of the problem is that we don't have a good leader like commander or first sergeant with the experience to help the people. Those people increase the stress of the unit."

"About the way I had to do my job over there."

"Our immediate leader and his way of overwork and compared his physical power with small sized men."

**HAVE YOU TALKED WITH ANYONE FROM YOUR UNIT ABOUT YOUR WORK IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**NO:**

"I don't see many of the guys in my unit except on drill weekend."

**WERE ANY FRIENDS OR RELATIVES OF YOURS KILLED OR WOUNDED IN THE PERSIAN GULF WAR?**

"Childhood friend, Bradley driver, killed by an Iraqi anti-tank round."

"A helicopter crashed."

"First sergeant had a bad accident with his truck when a civilian truck stuck on his truck. I was so sad about it. He is a good friend."

**WERE THERE ANY FAMILY PROBLEMS WHILE YOU WERE IN THE PERSIAN GULF?**

"My grandfather died."

"My parents were divorced and my younger brother forced to leave home."

"An unplanned birth."

"My grandfather found out he has colon cancer."

"My wife was going crazy."

"Paying bills."

"Children discipline."

"My older daughter left home."

"My father died and my commander didn't want to let me go on emergency leave, but he did."

"My wife was in a hospital with nervous problems."

"Emotional problems. I missed my wife and 3 children."

"Personnel in the post did not provide my wife with proper information when needed."

"My mother still nervous and lost weight, she has eating problems, my son is down in classes."

"Economically (pay problems), neighborhood."

"My father had terminal cancer."

"Still have problems with paying my bills."

"My father and my fiance had trouble going to their jobs when the war began. They stayed at home for about one week because of the stress."

"My brother was shot, but thank God he's OK."

"My mother and my wife were sick."

"Father ill."

"Emotional problems."

"My son had open-heart surgery and I think about that too much."

"My wife out of control."

"My wife gave birth."

"I am a school bus driver (self-employed) and my wife a school teacher. I had to find a good person to take care of my job. I did, but two months later he was very sick and my wife had to find another person. This created a very stressful problem for her. She quit her job to take over mine and so we have financial problems."

"My baby got sick and was very nervous. She had not seen me for a long time because of the war."

"I missed my wife and children."

"My grandmother died."

"My older son was hospitalized on several occasions and I was never notified. My professional colleagues were disrespectful."

"My spouse suffered a nervous breakdown and mom had high blood pressure."

"My kids got low average in the school tests 'cause of the stress they were feeling."

**HAVE ANY FAMILY PROBLEMS DEVELOPED SINCE YOUR RETURN FROM THE PERSIAN GULF?**

**YES:**

"Me and my sister cannot get along."

"My wife couldn't handle my return and we were divorced."

"I found out that my parents spent three-fourths of my money while I was away. It caused distrust between us."

"Father died."

"Me not getting paid."

"Children distant and family not as close."

"Sometimes my wife and me cannot resolve little problems."

"I argue (fight) with my wife and children."

"Adaptation to the civilian life."

"I cannot control my temper. I get furious and my anger is stronger, I feel like hurting someone; feel strange, unrelaxed."

"My job. They are not treating me fairly."

"My family has mental problems because of the war and they still go to the medic."

"My wife did not adjust with my change."

"Economic."

"Arguments with my family members, I left home."

"Too much fighting with my spouse and family."

"Drinking a lot of alcohol."

"To resolve my economic problems."

"Am getting upset too fast, know it's my problem and not their's."

**HAVE YOU OBTAINED ANY MEDICAL CARE SINCE YOUR RETURN?  
DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF YOUR CARE.**

"Left elbow hurts. Doctor said I have tennis elbow. This only started after I came back."

"Still receiving treatment for an injury."

"I have a rash that has gotten worse since coming home."

"Lower back, slipped on ice at Ft. ... during the deployment and had lower back problems ever since."

"I had a bacteria throat infection three weeks after I got home."

"I was in medical hold for one month. I had problems with left big toe, and left shoulder. I also tested positive for TB virus. I am presently taking medication through the county health dept."

"Sinus trouble."

"I was hit over the head with a shovel."

"Left hip, right shoulder, right foot."

"I have carpal tunnel syndrome. I can't say that it happened due to the deployment."

"I don't know how to get any help."

"Anxiety, change of moods, depression."

"My brother died."

"I have back problems, problem with my shoulders and right arm. I have a pinched nerve in the right arm and have not received any medical care"

from the VA. In May 1991 I went to the emergency room for treatment and they gave me an appointment for Sep 9, 1991."

"Sore left ankle - it is still sore and hurts a lot. Hurt my left bicep. No treatment received because physician did not feel it was necessary. However, I went to a private physician and medical treatment is required. A strong possibility to sue the US Army or physician for malpractice at Federal District Court in Puerto Rico."

"Fell down in Saudi and received left knee surgery."

"I feel I should see a psychologist for an evaluation about my reaction toward life and everything surrounding me. I cannot seem to get my life straight, very confused. Anger is my main problem. Also sometimes even if I'm with my loved ones, I feel lonely. Sometimes I feel good about life, sometimes I feel happy. Then again there are opposite days, I want to walk out."

"It was related to the problem but they said that I will never be OK because of my back."

"Lower back pain."

"Sore throat."

"Relating my emotional status."

"I need medical care for my emotions."

"Depression because I couldn't adapt to the civilian life, also depressed because my family didn't understand my feelings and so there were lots of arguments."

"Stomach pain."

"My cars and my conduct."

"Went to the aid station for problems in my back two times and my back still hurts."

"I don't feel like writing it down in a paper."

"Can't sleep. Headache. Eyes red. Jump if hear sound. Cough all the time, mostly at night."

**STRESS AND COPING IN A RESERVE UNIT:  
EPIDEMIOLOGIC CONSULTATION TO 123RD ARCOM**

## SUMMARY

In Spring 1992 an epidemiologic consultation (EPICON) team investigated a possible disease outbreak among 123rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) soldiers from Indiana, who were veterans of the Persian Gulf War. These soldiers complained of a variety of symptoms: memory loss, fatigue, joint pain and swelling, dental problems, loss of hair, and diarrhea. Initial evaluation by the Division Surgeon found no consistent medical diagnosis to explain the symptoms, however, he was concerned that possibly some of the soldiers suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

On April 11-12 1992, 78 soldiers were evaluated by a multidisciplinary team. Psychiatric assessment consisted of a brief interview by a psychiatrist and completion of a modified Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) by the soldier. In the course of the interview, the psychiatrist explored the soldier's beliefs about the etiology of the symptoms; stressors before, during and after deployment; experiences during Desert Shield/Storm; and specific worries and concerns about their symptoms. The BSI is a 53-item self-report symptom inventory designed to measure distress and somatic concerns. The BSI was supplemented with 21 items which focused on symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Because the diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder hinges upon exposure to a traumatic stressor, efforts were made to document traumatic exposure in these individuals. Only one of the soldiers interviewed described being in combat. (He was on active duty at the time and was not assigned to the 123rd ARCOM during the Persian Gulf War.) No one in the units sustained battle-related injuries. A post newspaper reported that an officer had been killed in a truck accident while in Southwest Asia. She was not assigned to the units we interviewed; none of the soldiers mentioned her death. Roughly a quarter of the soldiers (28%) reported that they had seen dead bodies during the course of the war. Few soldiers reported being disturbed by memories of these scenes. Other hallmarks of PTSD, hypervigilance and physiologic reactivity upon exposure to events reminiscent of the war, were seldom reported by this group. Several soldiers mentioned that they still found themselves reaching for gasmasks when they heard the tornado sirens go off.

Many of the soldiers reported feeling that the Reserves had been treated as "second class citizens" during the war by Active Army components. For example, members of the 417th Quartermaster Company voiced disappointment and anger that in contrast to their active duty counterparts who were recognized for their achievements, the 417th was not awarded a unit citation due to a technicality.

There was considerable diversity in how the deployment was experienced. Many voiced their disappointment in life since their homecoming; they viewed the deployment as an opportunity for adventure and felt that they had made valuable contributions to their country. Others felt that the experience was terrible, that their lives had been disrupted and that they really had not been needed. Most soldiers voiced something in between these two extremes.

Results from the modified Brief Symptom Inventory will allow comparison to other groups who deployed and did not deploy to Southwest Asia. In this investigation the BSI quantified various somatic and psychological complaints. The questionnaire findings were consistent with interviews, not supporting the presence of significant levels of PTSD.

Based on the brief psychiatric interviews, approximately 12 of the soldiers were felt to have a psychiatric disorder(s) and to warrant further evaluation. The tentative diagnoses were diverse, e.g. substance abuse, adjustment disorder, major depression, etc. They were referred to the 123rd ARCOM's mental health team for further evaluation and disposition.



## INTRODUCTION

In the early spring of 1992, the Department of Preventive Medicine at WRAIR was asked to investigate a possible disease outbreak among soldiers assigned to the 123rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) located in Indiana. Approximately 125 veterans of Operation Desert Shield/Storm assigned to the 123rd ARCOM had reported a wide variety of non-specific symptoms including fatigue, joint pains, skin rashes, headaches, loss of memory, mood changes, diarrhea, bleeding and painful gums, and hair loss. There were numerous rumors within the unit to explain the etiology of these symptoms; these included: exposure to radiation (both microwave and nuclear), toxins ((from pesticide-laden fish, SCUD fragments, petrochemical residuals, etc.), biological agents (anthrax vaccine or whatever substance(s) were administered in the immunization process) and endemic disease of the region (leishmaniasis, etc.). Initial evaluation by the 123rd ARCOM's Division Surgeon yielded no unifying diagnosis other than a suspected reaction to stress. He requested assistance from Washington to further evaluate these soldiers.

An epidemiologic consultation (EPICON) team was assembled by the team leader, a preventive medicine officer with experience in the investigation of disease outbreaks. The EPICON team was comprised of the preventive medicine officer, an occupational medicine specialist, a psychiatrist and a dentist. This team was sent to Indiana and on 11-12 April evaluated seventy-nine of the 123rd ARCOM soldiers with symptoms and/or concerns. Each soldier completed a medical questionnaire and a modified Brief Symptom Inventory and was interviewed by an epidemiologist, an occupational medicine physician and a psychiatrist. All were examined by an oral pathologist and had blood drawn for laboratory testing.

After reviewing all the findings there was no evidence of an outbreak or cluster of any unique disease process. Very few soldiers gave histories that suggested exposure to known hazardous substances. Reported symptoms did not correspond with known health effects of those exposures. Furthermore, because the soldiers were deployed on different time schedules and scattered throughout Saudi Arabia and Iraq, there were very few exposures common to the entire group. Positive objective findings on physical examination and laboratory screening testing were very limited, and were similar to those found in soldiers from Fort Lewis, WA and Fort Bragg, NC, who were not deployed to SW Asia. The paucity of abnormal physical or laboratory findings, the types of symptoms endorsed, the association of onset with the symptoms with reunion and results of the psychiatric evaluation suggest that many of the symptoms are likely to be stress-related. These may represent a stress reaction to deployment and subsequent reunion and readjustment to civilian life. However, symptoms could also be due to a medical condition(s) which has yet to be diagnosed. Arrangements were made for mental health assets of the 123rd ARCOM to further evaluate and treat individuals who were identified as having psychological problems with adjustment. The mental health teams also implemented group stress reduction interventions with the unit. This section presents results from the psychiatric interviews and Brief Symptom Inventory questionnaires completed on 11-12 April 1992.

*Summary of Response Frequencies*

**STRESSORS**

Each soldier's interview was coded for the presence or absence of deployment and war stressors. Probable Axis I psychiatric conditions warranting further assessment were also noted. Because the time spent with each individual was limited, the interviews were not comprehensive. Therefore, while a notation of the endorsement of a stressor may be interpreted as reflecting the soldier's report, the absence of a given stressor may or may not reflect the soldier's experience.

The following percentages of soldiers reported:

**PRE- AND POST-DEPLOYMENT STRESSORS:**

Financial	23%
Break-up of relationship	24%
Loss of job/quit school	11%
Death or serious illness in family	9%
Children having problems	11%
Newly married	10%
New baby	1%
Recent promotion/demotion	6%
Other deployment stressors	23%

**WAR-RELATED STRESSORS**

Frustration/anger at command	47%
Exposure to dead bodies	28%
Exposure to SCUD attacks	15%
Boring duty	10%
Fear of dying/being killed	20%
Other war-related stressors	8%

N.B. It should be noted that many of those who said they saw corpses in Southwest Asia denied being particularly troubled by them. However, since this aspect of war often represents a significant trauma it was included if any exposure took place, irrespective of the individual's reaction to it.

**BSI RESULTS**

Twenty percent (20%) or more of the group endorsed experiencing the following symptoms at the level of "quite a bit" or "extremely" during the week prior to filling out the questionnaire (N = 79):

Feeling low in energy or slowed down	61%
Feeling easily tired	52%
Feeling easily annoyed or irritated	51%

Sleep that is restless or disturbed	44%
Trouble falling asleep	37%
Feeling weak in parts of your body	36%
Trouble remembering things	33%
Trouble concentrating	33%
Worrying too much about things	32%
Temper outbursts that you could not control	28%
Having to check and double-check what you do	28%
Numbness or tingling in parts of your body	25%
Feeling less interested in activities once important to you	24%
Feeling tense or keyed up	24%
Getting into frequent arguments	24%
Nervousness or shakiness inside	24%
Nausea or upset stomach	23%
Feeling so restless you can't sit still	23%
Repeated unpleasant thought that won't leave your mind	22%
Your mind going blank	21%
Feeling lonely	20%
Having urges to break or smash things	20%
Feeling easily startled	20%

### *Summary of Comments Made During Interview*

#### **WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION TO LEARNING THAT YOU WOULD BE DEPLOYED?**

"Disbelief. I really didn't think we'd go. I thought we'd stay over here. I cried. I didn't want to go."

"I volunteered. Thought it was a good cause and wanted to go."

"We'd heard it through the grapevine that we were going, so we were just waiting for the actual day. ...a little scared at first."

"Shock. My girlfriend didn't handle it very well. She got more involved--was family support coordinator."

"We had heard rumors about it since August. Everybody kept saying, 'I don't think we'll go over.' I found out right there at the Reserve Center. I cried because I didn't want to leave my son. I had to bring him over to my brother's." (Both soldier and her husband deployed.)

"First it was a shock because I was inactive and everybody always said to join a supply unit because you'd never go anywhere. It was not a big deal for me because I had been on the DMZ for 18 months in Korea."

"I really didn't have any until I actually left home. I had to take my daughter to a child psychiatrist because she wouldn't stop crying for two weeks...The therapist asked my daughter what she'd do if she had a magic wand. She said that she'd have her mom not be in the Army, not be any wars and her

mom would stay home. I could tell she was 'taken' with the therapist...that helped considerably."

"Total disbelief. At 1128 P.M. we got the 'roaring bull' notification. My wife went into a complete hysterical breakdown."

"I volunteered to go. I wasn't getting anywhere with my military career and wanted to go out with a bang!"

"I was expecting it. My knees got a little weak when I got the phone call."

"I was kind of happy. I was excited 'cause I got to leave the country and see something different."

"Oh, God..I don't know whether it was scared or frightened or frustrated. Kind of like fear of the unknown. Kind of like that feeling right before Basic Training when your bus is driving through the gate, 'oh, shit, what have I gotten myself into this time?' "

## DEPLOYMENT EXPERIENCES

"I went to Kuwait and saw the destruction and bodies up there. I don't think it affected me that much. I was prepared for what I saw. One thing that was stressful for probably everybody in the unit was our higher command. We felt like we got screwed over almost on a daily basis and I think that caused stress for almost everybody."

"It was kind of irritating, just moving around a lot. I just took it as part of my duty and drove on. The biggest job we did was a tank mission where we brought in old tanks to be washed and counted and sent back to the states or to Germany." ( He noted that he had proposed to his girlfriend in January and the hardest thing during deployment occurred on 12 FEB when he was able to call home.) "She said, 'I'm breaking up with you.' When I found out we were at a tank site about 5 miles from the border. I talked to the NCOIC and they let me go back to KKMC the next day. I was kind of denying it and upset with the situation and trying to still do my job. Towards the end it was on my mind a lot. I cried a lot and couldn't talk about it with anyone."

"Boring."

"It was hard. I had a relationship that was falling apart. While I was in Saudi I got letters where she questioned our relationship. I felt helpless. I couldn't get to a phone. She had no sympathy for the Army Reserves. She's out there, 'well, you dug your own hole.' "

"Getting over there and being over there was a pain in the ass. I guess one of the things was while we were at Ft. Knox waiting to get shipped over, the people there on post would yell at us one day [for not being as good as the Active Army]..but when we'd try to get clothing issued they'd say 'oh, but you guys are just a bunch of reservists.' It seemed like every time we turned around we were being screwed over one way or the other."

"I didn't like it...scared, sometimes I didn't know if I'd ever be coming back. I didn't want to die in a foreign country..the thought of never seeing my family again."

"I didn't mind it. We ran our missions and what I had to do wasn't very much. I still had like paperwork to do and stuff, but there was nothing stressful. We were out in no-man's land, so not too many worries."

"I had fun. I was working communications and that was new for me. The barracks that got hit by the SCUD--that really bothered me. I had been talking to some of the people that died the night before. They had picked up fuel at the site."

"Well, I don't have much use for Arabs. We got there after the ground war had ended. Went into tanks that had been all shot up. Didn't see any dead bodies or anything. Once again I was disappointed because I got there when it was over again. I felt a sense of contribution during Vietnam, loading bombs, etc. In Saudi was part of clean-up. Would like to have been able to say 'I was there.'"

"Only stress I had was not enough sleep because of incoming SCUDS. Nobody knew what was in those SCUDS and you can't really see smoke or gas because it's night. You just put on mask and wait it out."

"What was Saudi like? A reporter asked me that question and I told him it was 1500 miles of flat and brown. The best part was leaving. The worst part was going through SCUD attacks and writing to your children and not knowing if you'd see them. I was on every major battlefield except for Kuwait City. Saw EPW's. Saw dead citizens. Saw dead Iraqi soldiers. I never had to fire a round. I never killed anybody. That, I guess, is a godsend. I don't have to live with that."

"I matured a lot and got good experience."

"I enjoyed it. I met a lot of people and it just kind of proved that a lot of people from different areas could work together for a common cause."

"I guess having your life threatened gives you a different outlook on what's important."

"Basically it had nothing to do with the war. I lost my sister while I was over there. I didn't get the word until March. My wife and I had an agreement that I didn't want to hear any bad news from home. The ground war had started and she didn't want me to know about it till later. That was fine."

"Being screwed with a lot. We got a lot of bad vibes or whatever, our hopes were shot down so much...telling us we're going home but we're not. It wasn't the CO's fault. They'd give him an answer and then they'd turn around and say 'you're going to have to stay there a little longer.'"

"I had a good time. I liked it."

"Very frustrating because my company commander didn't show too much concern for the troops. The CO was gone most of the time and complained about not getting a shower but got one four times a week. There were times where the whole company could only wash out of bowls for 5-6 weeks. The CO got lost in Iraq twice while leading the convoy. 'led them through a minefield (at least the first two, I was the third). It was a stressful situation because I could say nothing but had to respond to things I knew weren't correct to do."

"It was like a vacation really. I really had a nice time. After the work was all done and our mission was completed, 'got to see the good part of Saudi. We partied amongst the unit." [He noted they had access to Sadic, an alcoholic drink made by Filipinos.]

### **Adjustment Experiences upon Return Home**

"I noticed a change in my behavior. Probably my behavior was changing while I was there but I didn't notice it because of the stress in the unit. I'm much more short-tempered, irritable and violent behavior which I wasn't before."

"Glad to be home but also very hurt, upset, troubled, and confused. Life was just totally different. 'Stayed with family and kids because that was solid in my life."

"After I got home I took some time to visit family and friends and then started working construction again for my summer job. 'Went back to Purdue full-time in the fall. 'Had a pretty tough time of it trying to deal with classes and getting everything done, remembering stuff."

"I sat at home and started to evaluate my performance. I was looking for things I could do to improve myself and help the unit. I was getting motivated for college. 'Feeling myself and the family out. I had to learn to get back into a routine."

"My dad didn't like the idea of my being pregnant. I've heard so many comments from people at work about having fun instead of fighting for my country."

"I was kind of on a high, getting back to civilization and what the changes were. My girlfriend and I first started living together. About a month after that we started to get into arguments together. I'm not as bad now but I still fly off the handle about little things. She says I'm 'hateful'."

"I'm so bitter and that's eating me up inside...I feel like I'm a changed person. Now I feel like people don't like me, like I'm the enemy."

"But when I came back it wasn't the same, it seems like there's something missing. 'Seems like my family's different, my friends are different. I was expecting more love and stuff out of them when I returned."

"Just like I never left."

"I kicked myself on the plane ride all the way home 'cause I wished I had stayed over there. I had nothing to come home to. It's worked out better. When I first got home, for 2 months I didn't do anything except go see friends and see people I hadn't seen for a long time. Then reality hit. I still didn't have a job."

"My daughter seen me and her eyes got real big and she started shouting 'Mom! Mom!' Everybody started to cry. Our picture came out in the paper and the teacher made a big banner in red, white and blue with our picture on it. I didn't go back to work until July. I just took a break. I decided to get back with my ex-husband but that only lasted 9 days. He was lazy. I believe he's a drug addict and he's an alcoholic. Come to find out, [he was] still lying, still drinking and still taking drugs and he was still an asshole so I told him to go."

"It was a refreshing thought because I was seeing people that I knew. I got my old job back. Shortly after that the divorce was final. Very mutual..."

"I got home and two of our daughters were pregnant. I have two and my husband has three so altogether we have five. I'd found out about it when I called home in May. What was strange is that it didn't bother me to the point that I was mad or upset. Over there I noticed that I didn't let things bother me. Since I've been home, I get mad or upset about the littlest thing."

"I had a kidney stone and got shipped out about three weeks before my unit dis [he was air-Evac'd to Germany]. Took awhile to readjust. 'Was glad to have a week to decompress. Just to see the trees and houses you were dumbfounded like you'd never seen it before. I was kind of readjusted by the time I got home to my family. Temper was a little short to begin with, but that's gotten a lot better now. For the most part, it's like you never went."

"Harder than going over there."

"It's not too bad. The CO, SGM and all them are gone now, so it's a lot better. We're making a lot of changes and things are looking better. When I first got back I wanted out."

"Things were okay at first. Then I noticed shorter temper with the kids and adjustments my wife had made while I was gone. She took up everything, like she took over the bills. The children range from 6 to 13 and they've all excelled while I was gone. She [daughter] worked with my wife and can count and spell. I missed part of their growing up. Not being needed anymore."

"When I first got back I didn't want to be around my family. I felt like they were going to smother me. Everything seems so dull. I miss all the people I was over there with so much. Sometimes I get depressed missing it."

**STRESS AND COPING AT HOME:  
RESPONSE OF FIRST-TERM ARMY WIVES TO  
THE PERSIAN GULF WAR**



## SUMMARY

Survey instruments were designed to investigate wives' adjustment to the military during their husbands' first term of enlistment in the Army. The initial questionnaires were mailed out in October 1990 and the vast majority was received back by Thanksgiving. A follow-up survey was distributed to the 176 original respondents in July 1991. In addition to general measures of adjustment, the second instrument asked questions relating to the wives' experience of Operation Desert Storm.

One hundred and sixteen wives participated in both the original and follow-up surveys (a response rate of 66% for the follow-up survey). The respondents to the follow-up survey did not differ significantly on age, race, education and husband's rank from respondents to the original survey. Sixty percent (60%) of the wives were younger than 25 years of age; approximately 20% were non-white; 68% had at least some college and roughly one-half were employed.

This group of women reported that they had been quite worried about loved ones being sent to combat. Fifty-seven percent (57%) described themselves as having been very worried or extremely worried that their husbands would be deployed to the Gulf. Thirty-seven percent (37%) reported that they had been very or extremely worried that friends or family members would be sent to the war. While relatively few women had their fears about their husbands realized (11% of this group's husbands were deployed to Southwest Asia), 80% of them knew someone who was in the Gulf.

These women described themselves as avid followers of the news during the Gulf War. The percentages of wives utilizing various news sources is listed below:

Television	98%
Newspaper	89%
Radio	81%
Friends	79%
Family members	63%
Husband's unit	49%
Magazine	48%

Television was the most highly utilized source of news--98% of the women reporting its use. Over two-thirds of the wives reported watching one and one-half hours or more of television news on a daily basis during the war; 40% watched three or more hours of TV.

## INTRODUCTION

In 1989 a pilot study was conducted to focus research questions about First-Term Army Wives and their adjustment to the military. The original plan for the survey consisted of collecting longitudinal data over a two-year period in order to observe continual development, change and adjustment both to the Army and life events. Screening criteria were used to select traditional marriages (i.e. soldier husband and civilian wife). The husband had to be in his first term of enlistment. Lists of names were provided from units at Ft. Carson, Colorado, home of a mechanized infantry division and support elements. In responses to a large mailing, 219 women indicated eligibility and willingness to take part in the study.

Pilot interviews and data were collected in March 1989. Initial (Time 1) questionnaires were mailed to wives in October, 1990. The vast majority of Time 1 surveys were received by Thanksgiving, 1990. One hundred and seventy-six (176) surveys were received by 1 January 1991, the cut-off date for inclusion in this study. The response rate at Time 1 was approximately 80%.

The Persian Gulf War erupted shortly after the Time 1 surveys had been collected. The air war began on 17 January 1991, several weeks after the deadline for inclusion in the study. The ground war commenced on 24 February 1991. President Bush halted the American offensive at midnight on 27 February 1991.

A decision was made to modify the original plan for follow-up surveys in order to investigate the impact of the Persian Gulf War on first-term Army wives. Questionnaires were devised which included open-ended questions, standardized scales and questions addressing specific aspects of the wives' experience of the war. In July, 1992 follow-up surveys were mailed to the 176 participants of the initial study. One hundred and sixteen (116) of the Time 1 respondents completed and returned the follow-up questionnaire, yielding a response rate of approximately 66%. This section will present initial findings on the follow-up surveys.

### *Summary of Response Frequencies*

The wives were presented with a list of comments made by people after stressful life events (Horowitz' Impact of Events Scale). They were asked to think back to the height of the war and indicate how frequently these comments were true for them at the time. Twenty percent (20%) or more of the women endorsed that they thought the comments applied to them "often" during the height of the war. The comments and the percentage of the population reporting this level of frequency is reported below:

- I had thoughts of the war and its victims. (56%)
- I talked with my husband about the war. (54%)

- My husband talked to me about the war. (43%)
- I had waves of strong feelings about the war. (38%)
- I felt lonely or blue. (35%)
- I felt tense or keyed up. (27%)
- I thought about it when I didn't mean to. (26%)
- Pictures of it popped into my mind. (25%)
- I felt restless. (25%)
- Other things kept making me think about the war. (24%)
- I was irritable. (24%)
- I spent time with my peers and friends. (22%)
- I felt very tired. (21%)
- I had trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. (21%)

The wives were also asked to indicate their ways of coping with the war. Thoughts and behaviors which were endorsed as being used quite a bit or a great deal by 50% or more of the wives are listed below:

- I prayed. (75%)
- Rediscovered what was important in life. (62%)
- Wished that the situation would go away or be over with. (57%)
- I reminded myself how much worse things could be. (57%)
- I prepared myself for the worst. (53%)
- Hoped a miracle would happen. (52%)
- Turned to work or substitute activity to take my mind off things. (51%)
- I felt that time would make the difference—only thing to do was wait. (50%)

In contrast to frequently used means of coping, thoughts and behaviors felt or used by 10% or less of the wives on a frequent basis included:

- Tried to get the person responsible to change his mind. (3%)
- Took a big chance and did something risky. (4%)
- Slept more than usual. (6%)
- I got professional help. (6%)
- Drew on my past experiences; I was in a similar situation before. (6%)
- I did something which I didn't think would work, but at least I was doing something. (7%)
- Refused to believe it had happened. (7%)
- Avoided being with people in general. (8%)
- Criticized or lectured myself. (9%)
- Realized I brought the problem on myself. (9%)
- I tried something entirely different than was listed. (9%)
- Went on as if nothing had happened. (10%)
- Took it out on other people. (10%)

In addition to the stress of the war, many of these women experienced major life events between the original and the follow-up survey. Many of these events may be related to the war directly or indirectly, for example, an unanticipated move due to the husband's deployment to the Gulf or to backfill assignments vacated by those deployed to the Gulf. The following percentages of the wives reported undergoing the major life stresses listed below:

- Work-related change or major change in finances. (52%)
- Other major life event not listed. (43%)
- Marriage, birth of child, pregnancy. (40%)
- Death or significant illness of a family member. (38%)
- Significant personal accident or personal illness (11%)
- Divorce or separation. (10%)

*Summary of Written Comments*

In keeping with the original plan for the survey, questions were directed at changes in the wives' experiences of the Army and reasons for any shifts in attitudes. While Operation Desert Shield/Storm had a significant impact on these women, many other factors played a role in their level of satisfaction with the Army. One focus of the survey was to determine the extent to which the Persian Gulf War affected the women, e.g. did their husbands deploy, were they worried that their husband would deploy, etc.

**DID YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO WAS DEPLOYED?**

"People in my husband's battery."

"A close friend."

"My husband and his unit."

"My brother-in-law."

"Many good friends from college- about 10 people, total."

"Several people from the hospital."

"My chaplain."

Note: Many of the respondents listed the names of people they knew who had deployed.

**DESCRIBES YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT THEIR DEPLOYMENT:**

"I was very scared for them."

"Very anxious, worried about their safety and also about their wives and how they were coping."

"My husband volunteered and so did the others. I was worried for his safety, but I was very proud of him and so were my and his family!"

"I was very afraid because they were in my husband's unit. Also, many negative thoughts crossed my mind of the guys not returning to the U.S."

" 'Sorry for her as she had just gotten married."

"Prayed that they would come back safely."

"It showed how unfaithful she was when he left."

"He had just gotten back from Korea and had to go! While he was over in Korea his wife had a hard time, then this happened. It sucked!"

"I was extremely worried about my friends and concerned they would be killed and I'd never again see them. I also worried about their families left behind and how they'd handle the situation."

"I was upset because the more deployments from my husband's co-workers, the closer they would get to my husband."

"I was thinking that it was unfair to be in the war for the second time consecutively."

"Not overly upset, because I wasn't close with them."

"They did what they had to do! I knew they were well trained and was not particularly overly worried about them."

"I had no problems with his deployment. We have a very good, secure relationship and we knew it was his job. It was difficult being separated, but we managed."

"I was extremely worried for his safety and was scared he'd come home in a body bag. I was very worried about what would happen to me and our daughter if anything did happen."

"I was shocked and somewhat concerned for their safety. I was mostly surprised, I guess. I never thought that I would have to see a war that our country was involved in, in my lifetime."

"He had come close to being deployed several times before he got his orders. During that time I felt as if I was on a powder keg waiting for it to explode. I had a lot of anxiety and tears before he got his orders. Once I knew he was going I was worried, but calmer, as I finally knew where and when he was going."

"I was extremely worried and anxious. I was living on the German economy and did not receive Armed Forces Network. There was no way for me to know what was happening. I was afraid to venture out of my apartment very often."

"I was quite nervous. They were making wills, which proved the gravity of the situation to me."

"While he was there his family had some huge problems and he had to come home early. They had to fight everyone in their way so it took forever for him to be sent home. I thought it was very terrible the way the Army treated him and his family."

## *Stress and Coping with War*

"I was worried about her safety. She had to leave her husband and her one-and-a-half year old child behind for five months. Now they are thinking about divorce."

### **DID YOU THINK THE NEWS REPORTS ON THE WAR WERE BELIEVABLE?**

"No. I felt like maybe they might have made it out to be too easy for us like they were covering us the real happenings."

"Yes. Somewhat biased, but believable."

"No. I was a communications major in college, so I understand how fallible the media is and can be when faced with such vast amounts of information to disseminate."

"Yes. I attempted to remain neutral when listening to analysis and speculation. I was really only interested in the facts and watched CNN. I felt that CNN offered the most hands-on reporting without as much analysis and individual opinions as found on the other networks."

"Yes. It wasn't over dramatized. Everyone was cautious instead of bigheaded (bragging). I was glad they weren't giving out too much till after things happened for security reasons and the safety of our men."

"Yes. The news reports were as accurate as the White House let them be. The news made it seem so real. It made me worry more."

"Yes. The reporters were there filming the SCUDs and Patriots as they were in the air. It doesn't get more believable than that!"

"Yes. Basic news, although not all that was known (which I understand reasons for). 'Got calls and letters confirming news from those who were there.'"

"Yes. I realize that the news did not reveal all of the activities that were going on in the Gulf War. That would not be possible. I was thankful for what I was able to find out by watching the news. Knowing a little is better than knowing nothing."

"Yes. But overdone! I don't want to watch a war play-by-play."

"Yes. Most were believable. Our newspaper made a terrible misprint. They printed that my husband's unit was deployed from Pinion Canyon, where they were out on maneuvers for a few weeks. We had no way of contacting our husbands for confirmation."

"Yes. But I felt that CNN might have covered just a little too much of the war. I felt it was hard for family members at home who had friends and family over there to watch so much coverage."

"No. The media only tells and shows certain situations. I felt they showed certain casualties so that the USA would show sympathy. War is war. It will be full of casualties."

"Yes. I saw a news clip of one of our friends. He seems well and ready for anything."

"Yes. Watched CNN live reports - was on all day at my office ( a co-worker's son was deployed). Do doubt the whole truth was even revealed to the press by the government. Very skeptical about official reports."

**DURING OPERATION DESERT STORM DID YOU TALK WITH ANY WIVES WHOSE HUSBANDS HAD BEEN IN OTHER WARS? IF SO, WHAT ADVICE DID THEY GIVE YOU?**

"Whatever happens, we can't control it. They're doing what they're trained to do. They (USA) are better trained and God will watch over them all. Always try to talk to someone about your feelings."

"Stay very close to the other wives in the military."

"Pray."

"Remain strong for both of you and give lots of support with a generous amount of love."

"When it is a person's turn to die it will happen sooner or later. (From my father-in-law who was in the Vietnam War.)"

"Don't watch the news."

"My mother--her advice was to put a pillow under my knees and keep praying! (My dad was in Vietnam 1969-70.)"

"My father was working for the State Department during the early 1970's. My mother encouraged me to talk and to take each day one at a time and only focus on the 'now' and not the 'what if's.'"

"Be strong, write daily, pray. Be prepared for the worst --have will and all insurance papers available to you."

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A WOMAN WHOSE HUSBAND HAS BEEN DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT AREA?**

"To find out about support groups (maybe through the chaplain); to get numbers of people who can help in emergencies--company wives, Red Cross, parent support groups."

"Stay busy. Find something to immerse yourself in. Write to your spouse regularly and try to keep it upbeat, it helps them. It is very important to keep the lines of communication open because you are both going through changes."

"Take each day one day at a time. Be aware of what can happen, but don't dwell on it. Talk to people and don't be afraid to cry and be afraid. Go to



wherever you need to go to get support. Focus attention on raising your children or working on your career. Always send upbeat letters to your husband."

"Write as often as possible, pray, don't feel like you always have to hold everything together. It's okay to cry, scream, and just plain old throw a temper tantrum."

"Maintain her routine. Keep active (job, hobbies, volunteer work.)"

"None, because I have never been in this situation."

"Don't watch the news. Write him lots of letters. Get involved with Red Cross, etc. on post."

"I don't know. I guess just pray and know he's out there for his country."

"Don't talk to women whose husbands are deployed. They only bring you down. If you must communicate about what's going on in the combat area, discuss it with men. They're much more rational about it, and cancel your CNN subscription. Too much news will drive you insane! Get out at least twice a week."

"Pray, you'll need it."

**WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THAT WIFE'S FRIENDS AND FAMILY ABOUT WHAT THEY COULD DO TO BE MOST HELPFUL?"**

"Keep her busy, but be available at all times for any reason."

"Be there for her -- no matter what her mood is!! She needs to know you care. Call her every day!!"

"Keep their noses out of it."

"Write letters and call."

"Be a good listener."

"Find names, numbers and sources that they could encourage her to take part in."

"Tell her she's pretty and special. Send her a Valentine, birthday gift. Invite her to visit. Call her regularly, tell her she's going to be fine. Listen to her cry, worry, get angry, talk about her husband. Be there. Write letters to her husband, too."

"Not to say 'everything is going to be alright' when they don't know for sure it will be. But to say more things like 'be strong' or 'I don't know how you feel, but if you need to talk to someone, I'm here.'"

"Call or visit a lot. Be understanding. You don't have to erase our fears-- just understand they are reasonable, logical fears and be empathetic."

"Watch kids, invite over to eat, listen!"

"Allow the individual to be his or herself. If they want to show their emotions in some way, let them do it as long as they like, but always reminding that person that they must and have to continue on with life."

"Help, prepare packages, and write letters. Let her know you are worried, too, so that she won't feel alone."

"Listen, understand, and never argue with how she feels—allow her to feel it."

"Don't bring up death, let her. Always offer support and encouragement. Don't approve of alcohol/drug abuse, just because she's feeling alone or helpless."

## INVESTIGATORS

### *Principal Investigators:*

**Robert J. Ursano, M.D.**  
Col, USAF, MC, FS (ret)  
Professor  
Chairman  
Department of Psychiatry  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**Carol S. Fullerton, Ph.D.**  
Research Assistant Professor  
Department of Psychiatry  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**Ann E. Norwood, M.D.**  
MAJ(P), MC, USA  
Assistant Professor  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**James E. McCarroll, Ph.D.**  
COL, MS, USA  
Research Psychologist  
Department of Military Psychiatry  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

**Florence R. Rosenberg, Ph.D.**  
Department of Military Psychiatry  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**Robert F. DeFraites, M.D.**  
LTC, MC, USA  
Division of Preventive Medicine  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

### *Co-Investigators:*

**E. Robert Wanat II, D.O.**  
MAJ, MC., USA  
Occupational and Environmental Medicine Division  
U.S. Army Environmental Hygiene Agency

**Stephen Williams, D.D.S.**  
MAJ, DC, USA  
Department of Oral Pathology  
Armed Forces Institute of Pathology

## **INVESTIGATORS (cont'd)**

**David Cowan, M.S.**  
MAJ, MS, USA  
Division of Preventive Medicine  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

### ***Research Assistants:***

**Elizabeth L. Dodge**  
SPC, USA  
Department of Military Psychiatry  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

**Stephen Harrison**  
SPC, USA  
Department of Military Psychiatry  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

**Timothy Callahan**  
SPC, USA  
Department of Preventive Medicine  
Walter Reed Army Institute of Research

**Susan E. Vass, E.A.**  
Department of Psychiatry  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**Elaine Schoka**  
Department of Psychiatry  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**Michelle Kaiser**  
Department of Psychiatry  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

**Kim Wright**  
Department of Psychiatry  
Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartone P. T., Ursano R. J., Wright K. M., & Ingraham L. H. (1989). The impact of a military air disaster on the health of assistance workers: a prospective study. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 177(6), 317-328.
- Baum A. (1987). Toxins, technology, and natural disasters. In *Cataclysms, Crises, and Catastrophes: Psychology in Action* (pp 5-54). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Baum A., Solomon S. D., and Ursano R. J. (in press). Emergency/disaster studies: practical, conceptual, and methodological issues, in *The International Handbook of Traumatic Stress Syndromes*. J. P. Wilson and B. Raphael (Eds.). New York Plenum Press, Inc.
- Behar D. (1984). Confirmation of concurrent illness in posttraumatic stress disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 141, 1310-1311.
- Belenky G. L., Tyner C. F., Sodot F. J. (1983). *Israeli battle shock casualties: 1983 and 1982* (Report WRAIR-NP-83-4). Washington, DC: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.
- Card J. J. (1983). *Lives After Viet Nam*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Chisholm R. R., Kasl S. V., Mueller L. (1986). The effects of social support on nuclear worker responses to the Three Mile Island accident. *Journal of Occupational Behavior*, 7, 179-193.
- Cowan M. L., & Cloutier M. C. (1988). Medical simulation for disaster casualty management training. *Journal of Trauma*, 28(1 suppl), S178-182.
- Davidson J., Swartz M., Storck M., Krishnan R. R., Hammett E. (1985). A diagnostic and family study of posttraumatic stress disorder. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 142, 90-93.
- DeFraités L. F., Wanat E. R. II, Norwood A. G., Williams S., Cowan D. Callahn T. (1992). Investigation of a suspected outbreak of an unknown disease among veterans of Operation Desert Shield/Storm, 123rd Army Reserve Command. Washington, D.C.
- Egendorf A., Kadushin C., Laufer R., et al (1981). *Legacies of Vietnam: Comparative Adjustment of Veterans and Their Peers* (pp 45-78). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Erikson K. T. (1976). *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood*. New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

- Escobar J. I., Randolph E. T., Puente G., Spiwak F., Asamen J. K., Hill M., Hough R. L. (1983). Post-traumatic stress disorder in Hispanic Vietnam veterans: clinical phenomenology and sociocultural characteristics. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 171, 585-596.
- Fain R. M., & Schreier R. A. (1989). Disaster, stress and the doctor. *Medical Education*, 23, 91-96.
- Frye J. S., Stockton R. A. (1982). Discriminant analysis of posttraumatic stress disorder among a group of Vietnam veterans. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 149, 52-56.
- Feldstein B. D., Gallery M. E., Sanner P. H., & Page J. R. (1985). Disaster training for emergency physicians in the United States: a systems approach. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 14, 36-40.
- Fullerton, C.S., McCarroll, J. E., Ursano, R. J., Wright, K.: Psychological responses of rescue workers: fire fighters and traum. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* (in press).
- Glass A. (1957). *Observations upon the epidemiology of mental illness in troops during warfare*. Symposium on preventive and social psychiatry, Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Walter Reed Army Medical Center and the National Research Council. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. (The Symposium took place April 15-17, 1957, and this paper was presented on April 15, 1957.)
- Holloway H. C., Ursano R. J. (1984). The Vietnam veteran: metaphor, social context and metaphor. *Psychiatry*, 47, 103-108.
- Iacobell F. P., & Schodowski L. (1980). Fire reaction training that really works. *Hospitals*, 54(3), 64-66.
- Kettner B. (1972). Combat strain and subsequent mental health. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica Supplementum*, 230, 5-107.
- Laufer R. S. (1985). War trauma and human development: the Viet Nam experience. In J. Sonnenberg, A. S. Blank Jr., J. Talbott (Eds), *Stress and Recovery in Viet Nam Veterans*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press.
- Lifton R. J., & Olsen E. (1976) The human meaning of total disaster, the Buffalo Creek experience. *Psychiatry*, 39, 1-18.
- Lima B. R., Chavez H., Samaniego N., Pompei M. S., Pai S., Santacruz H., & Lozano J. (1989). Disaster severity and emotional disturbance: implications for primary mental health care in developing countries. *Acta Psychiatry Scandinavia*, 79, 74-82.
- Lystad M. (1986). *Disasters and Mental Health: Innovations in Services to Disaster Victims* (pp 229-257). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.
- McCarroll, J. E., Ursano, R. J., Fullerton, C. S., Wright, K. M.: Community consultation following a major air disaster. *Journal of Community Psychology* (in press).

- Otten E. J., & Zink B. J. (1989). A four-year program to train residents in emergency medical services. *Academic Medicine*, 64(5), 275-276.
- Rundell J. R., Ursano R. J., Holloway H. C., & Siberman E. K. (1989). Psychiatric responses to trauma. *Hospital and Community Psychiatry*, 40, 68-74.
- Sanner P. H., & Wolcott B. W. (1983). Stress reactions among participants in mass casualty simulations. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 12(7), 426-428.
- Shalev A., Bleich A., & Ursano R. J. (in press). Post-traumatic stress disorder: somatic comorbidity and effort tolerance. *Psychosomatics*.
- Shore J. H., Tatum E. L., Vollmer W. M. (1986). Psychiatric reactions to disaster: the Mount St. Helen's experience. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 143, 590-595.
- Sierles F. S., Chen J. J., McFarland R. E., Taylor M. A. (1983). Posttraumatic stress disorder and concurrent psychiatric illness: A preliminary report. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 140, 1177-1179.
- Singer T. J. (1982). An introduction to disaster: some considerations of a psychological nature. *Aviation, Space, and Environmental Medicine*, 53(3), 245-250.
- Sledge W. H., Boydstun J. A., Rahe A. J. (1980). Self-concept changes related to war captivity. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 37, 430-443.
- Solomon S. D., Smith E. M., Robins L. N., and Fischbach R. L. (1987). Social involvement as a mediator of disaster -- induced stress. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 17(12), 1092-1112.
- Sowder B. J. (1986). *Disasters and Mental Health: Contemporary Perspectives* (pp 3-228). Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, Inc.
- Spitz R. (1965). *The First Year of Life -- Normal and Deviant Object Relations*. New York: International Universities Press.
- Stretch R. H., Vail J. D., Maloney J. P. (1985). Posttraumatic stress disorder among Army Nurse Corps Vietnam veterans. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 53, 704-708.
- Teirney K. J., Baisden B. (1979). *Crisis intervention programs for disaster victims: a source book and manual for small communities*. DHEW Publication No. (ADM) 79-675. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Ursano R. J. (1987). Comments on "Post-traumatic stress disorder : the stressor criterion" (invited commentary). *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 75, 273-275.
- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Exposure to Death, Disasters, and Bodies* (DTIC: A203163). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences.

- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Groups and Organizations in War, Disasters, and Trauma* (DTIC: A203161). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Individual and Group Behavior in Toxic and Contained Environments* (DTIC: A203267). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Individual Responses to Disaster* (DTIC: A203310). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Performance and Operations in Toxic Environment* (DTIC: A203162). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Training for the Psychological and Behavioral Effects of the CBW Environment* (DTIC: A203680). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J. and Fullerton C. S. (Ed.). (1988). *Psychological and Behavioral Responses to a chemical and Biological Warfare Environment: Final Recommendations* (DTIC: A203679). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J., Fullerton C. S., Wright K. M., McCarroll J. E., Norwood A. E., Dinneen M. M. (1992). *Disaster workers: Trauma and Social Support*. (DTIC: ABD165599). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J., Fullerton C. S., McCarroll J. E., Norwood A. E., Dinneen M. M., Jaccard J. T., Wain H. J. (1992). *Stress and Coping With War: Support Providers and Casualties of Operations Desert Shield/Storm*. (DTIC: # pending). Bethesda, MD: Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.
- Ursano R. J., Fullerton C. S. (1990). Cognitive and behavioral responses to trauma. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 20(21): 1766-1775.
- Ursano R. J. and McCarroll J. E. (1990). The nature of a traumatic stressor: Handling dead bodies. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 178(6), 396-398.
- Ursano R. J. (1981). The Vietnam era prisoner of war: Precaptivity personality and the development of psychiatric illness. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 138, 315-318.
- Ursano R. J., Boydston J. A., Wheatley R. D. (1981). Psychiatric illness in U.S. Air Force Vietnam prisoners of war: a five-year follow-up. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 138, 310-314.



- Ursano R. J., McCaughey, B., and Fullerton, C. S. (Eds.): *Individual and Community Responses to Trauma and Disaster: The Structure of Human Chaos*. Cambridge University Press, London (in preparation).
- Ursano R. J. and Norwood A. E. *Those Left Behind and Those Who Returned: Psychological Responses to War in Families, Children, and Soldiers*. American Psychiatric Press, Inc. (in preparation).
- Williams C. L., Solomon S. D., and Bartone P. (1988). Primary prevention in aircraft disasters. *American Psychologist*, 43(9), 730-739.
- Wright K., Ursano R. J., Bartone P., and Ingraham L. (1990). Individual and community responses to disaster: victim classification. *Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 60, 35-42.
- Wright K., Ursano R. J., Bartone P., & Ingraham L. (1988). *Community responses to disaster: victim classification* (Presented at the 141st Annual Meeting of American Psychiatric Association, May, 1988, Montreal, Canada).
- Wright K. (Ed.). (1987). *The human response to the Gander military air disaster: A summary report* (Report WRAIR-NP-88-12). Washington, DC: Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.
- Yager T., Laufer R., Gallops M. (1984). Some problems associated with war experience in men of the Vietnam generation. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 41, 327-333.